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(54) Title: BACTERIAL MASS PRODUCTION OF TAXANES AND PACLITAXEL

(57) Abstract

The present invention relates to a method of obtaining different biologically pure cultures of bacteria isolated from different species of Taxus such as Taxus canadensis, T. brevifolia, T. baccata, T. cuspi-data, and T. hunnewelliana, wherein the bacteria produce in vitro taxanes and paclitaxel, and wherein the bacteria are of the genus Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea or Curtobacterium. Also, the present invention relates to a method of a bacterial mass production of at least one taxane or paclitaxel. There is also disclosed a novel bacterial taxane. The present invention also relates to the use of different biologically pure cultures of bacteria isolated from different species of Taxus, wherein the bacteria are able to biotransform pro-taxanes. There is also provided a process for improving taxanes and paclitaxel production of taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria which include culturing bacteria in the presence of a mutagenic agent for a period a time sufficient to allow mutagenesis. There is disclosed two new mutated bacterial which have an increased yield of pro-taxane biotransformation.

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BACTERIAL MASS PRODUCTION OF TAXANES AND PACLITAXEL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(a) Field of the invention

The present invention relates to the production of paclitaxel and derivatives thereof (such as related taxanes) using a plurality of different bacteria isolated from different species of Taxus, and also to a novel taxane. There are disclosed methods for the isolation of these bacteria and the screening tests that were used to provide evidence that paclitaxel and taxanes were produced by said bacteria. There are also disclosed methods for the biotransformation of pro-taxanes by said bacteria.

15 (b) <u>Description of prior art</u>

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Paclitaxel, also referred to as Taxol™, has been first identified in 1971 by Wani and collaborators (Wani MC et al., 1971 J. Am. Chem. Soc., 93: 2325-2327) following a screening program of plant extracts of the National Cancer Institute. This complex diterpene showed cytotoxic activity against several types of tumors and is presently used in the treatment of some cancers such as ovarian and breast cancers. Clinical studies suggest that Taxol™ could eventually be used in the treatment of over 70% of human cancers.

Paclitaxel differs from other cytotoxic drugs by its unique mechanism of action. It interferes with cell division by manipulating the molecular regulation of the cell cycle. Paclitaxel binds to tubulin, the major structural component of microtubules that are present in all eukaryotic cells. Unlike other antimitotic agents such as vinca alkaloids and colcichine,

which inhibit the polymerization of tubulin, paclitaxel promotes this assembly of tubulin and stabilizes the resulting microtubules. This event leads to the interruption of cell division, and ultimately to cell death.

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The major obstacle in the use of paclitaxel as an anticancer treatment is its supply. It was originally isolated from the bark and leaves of yew trees such as Taxus brevifolia, T. baccata, T. cuspidata or, T. canadensis. The low yield of the isolation of paclitaxel (0,016 g%) and the limited availability of the trees have forced the scientific and industrial community to find alternative ways of producing paclitaxel.

The antitumor property of taxoid compounds has also lead to the generation of new anticancer drugs derived from taxanes. Taxotere™ (sold by Rhône-Poulenc Rorer), which is produced from 10-deacetylbaccatin III by hemisynthesis, is currently used in the treatment of ovarian and breast cancers. Furthermore, Abbott Laboratories is conducting clinical trials with a drug derived from 9-dihydro-13-acetyl baccatin III, a natural precursor specific to Taxus canadensis. The increasing demand for taxanes highlights the urgent need for renewable and economical processes that would not endanger plant species.

Presently, industrials are producing paclitaxel through hemisynthesis from baccatin III, a natural precursor of paclitaxel. However, this process still relies on a plant substance that must be extracted from yew trees. The first complete chemical synthesis of paclitaxel has been achieved in 1994 by Nicolaou et al. (1994, Nature, 367:630-634). This is a multistep proc-

ess and the overall yield has made this approach non economically feasible.

Plant cell culture of Taxus species is another approach explored by many groups (Yukimune et al., 1996, Nature Biotechnology, 14:1129-1132; Srinivasan et al., 1995, Biotechnology and Bioengineering, 47:666-676). Somehow, this process is limited by the amount of paclitaxel that can be produced, the length of incubation time required to obtain significant yields, and the application of plant cell culture to the large volumes required by the industry.

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In United States Patent No. 5,322,779, in the names of Gary A. Strobel et al. disclosed a fungus isolated from the bark of a sample of Taxus brevifolia which is able to synthetize paclitaxel at a level of 24-50 ng/l after a period of incubation of 3 weeks. Later, Strobel et al. (1996, Microbiology, 142:435-440) reported another fungus, Pestalotiopsis microspora, isolated from the inner bark of Taxus wallachiana that can produced up to 55 µg/l of paclitaxel within 5 weeks. Somehow, the long periods of incubation and the large volumes required to extract significant amounts of paclitaxel reduce the profitability of the process.

In United States Patent number 5,561,055 (issued 25 on October 1, 1996 in the names of Michel Pagé et al., the Applicant), there is disclosed one bacterium, which was referred to as Erwinia taxi, for the production of paclitaxel. Since then, this bacteria has been characterized as Sphingomonas taxi. This bacterium was 30 isolated from Taxus canadensis. It would be highly desirable to be provided with other bacteria having

highly diverse metabolic capacities isolated from different species of *Taxus* for the production of paclitaxel and related taxanes at higher yields.

It would also be highly desirable to be provided with widely different bacteria for the mass production of various different bacterial taxanes.

As mentioned in International Patent Application published under number WO97/16200, biotransformation process may be used for the generation of new taxanes molecules that lead to new therapeutic drugs. It would also be highly desirable to be provided with new strains of microorganisms able to biotransform taxanes compounds for use as therapeutic agents or to be modified by hemisynthesis.

Genetic manipulations of bacteria can increase the activity or the production of certain proteins. It would also be highly desirable to be provided with mutant of our original isolates that could produce and biotransform taxanes at higher levels.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One aim of the present invention is to provide a plurality of bacteria for the mass production of taxanes and paclitaxel.

Another aim of the present invention is to provide a method for bacterial mass production of taxanes and paclitaxel which overcomes all the drawbacks of the prior art.

Another aim of the present invention is to pro-30 vide a novel process for the production of taxanes and paclitaxel. The industrial application of this process would provide alternative renewable sources of taxoids

compounds for the pharmaceutical industry.

Another aim of the present invention is to provide a biotransformation process in which plant-derived taxanes are converted into substances that may be useful for the production of other therapeutic compounds.

In accordance with the present invention there is provided a method to obtain biologically pure cultures of bacteria isolated from Taxus, wherein said bacteria produce de novo taxanes and paclitaxel at a concentration of about 1 to 25 µg/L, wherein said bacteria are isolated from the inner surfaces of different species of Taxus including without limitations Taxus canadensis, T. brevifolia, T. hunnewelliana, T. baccata, and T. cuspidata.

In addition, said bacteria are capable of producing biotransformed taxanes wherein pro-taxanes are added to their culture medium.

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Such biologically pure cultures of bacteria of the present invention include, without limitation, bacteria of the genus selected from the group consisting of Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea, and Curtobacterium.

In accordance with the present invention, the bacteria include, without limitation, Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi, Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi, Pantoea sp. BCM 1, Pantoea sp. BCM 2, Pantoea sp. BCM 3, Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4, Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi, Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9 or Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5.

In accordance with the present invention there is also provided a method of bacterial mass production of taxanes and paclitaxel thereof which comprises the steps of:

- a) culturing the bacteria of the present invention in a growth-supporting nutrient medium capable of promoting growth and reproduction of said bacteria, and wherein said culturing is effected for a time sufficient to allow production of taxanes and paclitaxel; and
- b) isolating said produced taxanes and paclitaxel from said bacteria or culturing medium of step a).
- In accordance with the present invention there is also provided a process for improving taxanes and paclitaxel production of taxanes and paclitaxel production

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- a) culturing bacteria in the presence of a mutagenic agent for a period of time sufficient to allow mutagenesis;
 - b) selecting said mutants by a change of the phenotype which results in an increased production of taxanes and paclitaxel.
- The mutagenic agent may be a chemical agent, such as daunorubicin and nitrosoguanidine.

The mutagenic agent may be a physical agent, such as gamma radiation or ultraviolet.

The mutagenic agent may be a biological agent, such as a transposon.

In accordance with the present invention, the mutated bacteria include, without limitation, Sphingo-monas taxi D200 or Sphingomonas taxi D201.

In accordance with the present invention there
is also provided a method of bacterial biotransformation of taxanes and paclitaxel thereof which comprises
the steps of:

- a) incubating the bacteria of the present invention in a growth-supporting nutrient medium capable of promoting growth and reproduction of said bacteria, and wherein said incubation is effected in the presence of pro-taxanes for a time sufficient to allow production of taxanes and paclitaxel; and
- b) isolating said produced taxanes and paclitaxel thereof from said culturing medium of step a).
- In accordance with the present invention, there is also provided a process for improving biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel by taxanes and paclitaxel-producing bacteria comprising the steps of:

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- a) culturing bacteria in the presence of a mutagenic agent for a time sufficient to allow mutagenesis; and
 - b) selecting said mutants by a change of the phenotype which results in an increased biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel.

In accordance with the present invention there is also provided a method of bacterial biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel thereof which comprises the steps of:

- a) incubating the mutated bacteria of the present invention in a nutrient medium, and wherein said incubation is effected in the presence of protaxanes for a time sufficient to allow production of taxanes and paclitaxel; and
- b) isolating said produced taxanes and paclitaxel thereof from said culturing medium of step a).

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In accordance with the present invention there is also provided a novel bacterial taxane having a characteristic ultraviolet spectrum in HPLC as shown in Fig. 9B, Electrospray Ionization (EI) spectrum as shown in Fig. 10A, and characteristic fragments as shown in Fig. 10B.

This novel bacteria-derived taxane of the present invention is produced by at least two species of Bacillus (B. cereus ssp. taxi and B. megaterium ssp. taxi).

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For the purpose of the present invention the following terms are defined below.

The term "taxanes and paclitaxel" is intended to mean any paclitaxel derivatives or precursor which have retained or not the taxol-associated cytotoxic biological activity or are thought to be precursors in the synthesis of paclitaxel. Such taxanes and paclitaxel may be selected from the group consisting of all the diterpenes isolated from any Taxus species. The production of all taxanes by bacteria, whether pharmacologically active or inactive, is contemplated within the scope of the present invention. Taxanes that are produced by the bacteria of the present invention may be as such found in Taxus plant species or may differs from the ones found in Taxus plant species. 25

Exemplary taxanes which may be produced by the bacteria of the present invention include but are not limited to those of the following Formula I:

$$R_{1}$$
 R_{1}
 R_{1}

wherein R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} , R_{16} , R_{17} are defined in Table 1 below.

However, since bacteria have highly diverse metabolic capacities the taxanes and paclitaxel must only correspond to Formula I, whatever is the nature of R_1 to R_{17} substituants.

The term "pro-taxanes" used in accordance with the present invention is intended to mean any precursors of any taxanes in the biosynthesis pathway of paclitaxel in plant, fungi and bacteria, including, without limitation, 10-deacetylbaccatin III, baccatin III, cephalomannine, taxinines, taxuspines, taxusin, 7-xylosyl taxol, 7-epi-10-deacetyl taxol, 10-deacetyl taxol, paclitaxel, 7-epitaxol, taxadiene, geranyl-geranyl-pyrophosphate (GGPP) and farnesyl-pyrophosphate.

Exemplary pro-taxanes which may be biotrans-formed by the bacteria of the present invention include but are not limited to those of the preceding formula I where R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} , R_{16} , R_{17} are defined in Table 1 below.

Exemplary biotransformed taxanes of the present invention include, but are not limited to, those of the

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following Formula I where R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} , R_{16} , R_{17} are defined in Table 1.

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Compound	R ₁ ⁽¹⁾	R ₂	ಹ	7	Rş	R ₍₃₎	R, ⁽²⁾	R ₈ R ₄₇	R, R ₁₀ (4)	R ₁₁	R ₁₂ ⁽⁶⁾	R	R	R ₁₅ ⁽³⁾	R.
1) paclitaxel	tax	CH³	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	в-сн3	но-б	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	CH ₃	CH
2) 10-deacetyl- cephalomannine	ceph	CH³	I	р-он	0	р-сн	р-он В-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	β-ОH	I	CH3	£ E
3) 7-epitaxol	tax	SH ₃	I	β-acetyloxy	O _{II}	β-СН ₃	а-ОН	I	oxetane	α -acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	β-ОН	r	Ç Ł	CH ₃
4) 10-deacetyl-7- epitaxol	tax	CH,	I	р-он	0	β-СН ₃	а-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	GH ₃	Ę.
5) 7-epi- cephalomannine	ceph	CH ₃	I	ß-acetyloxy		в-сн3	a-0H	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	β-ОН	I	CH ₃	г
6) baccatin III	α-ОН	CF ₃	I	β-acetyloxy	0	р-сн	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α -benzoyloxy	B-0H	I	S. F.	CH
7) 10-deacetyl baccatin III	α-0H	දූ	r	9-он	O=	в-сн3	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	р-ОН	I	CH3	Ę,
8) cephalomannine	ceph	Ę,	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	р-сн ³	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	д-0H	I	CH ₃	ÇH,
9) 10-deacetyl taxol	tax	£	I	р-он	0	β-СН ₃	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	9-0H	I	CH3	CH ³
10) 7-xylosyl taxol	tax	£	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	β-СН ₃	β-xylosyl	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	B-0H	I	S. L	CH
11) 7-xylosyl- cephalomannine	ceph	£ E	I	β-acetyloxy	O _{II}	β-СН ₃	β-xylosyl	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	в-он	I	CH3	ਨੂੰ ਜ
12) taxagifine	0=	α- CH ₃	в-он	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	β-CH₃	ß-acetyloxy	I	α-cinnamoyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	α-acetyloxy	д-н	I	cyclo	a- CH
13) δ-benzoyloxy- taxagifine	0=	α-CH³	д-о н	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	β-benzoyloxymethyl	β-acetyloxy	I	α-cinnamoyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	α-acetyloxy	н-б	I	cyclo	α- CH ₃
14) 9-acetyloxy- taxusin	α-acetyloxy	G.	I	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	р-СН ₃	I	I	α-acetyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	I	I	I	$\frac{\Omega}{\epsilon}$	CH.
15) 9-hydroxy-taxusin	α-acetyloxy	CH ³	I	β-acetyloxy	а-ОН	р-СН ₃	I	I	α-acetyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	I	I	I	CH	Ę,
16) taxane la	tax	Ę,	I	0	O _{II}	р-СН 3	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-ОH	I	S. L	CH,
17) taxane Ib	taxsub	ڳ	I	0	0=	р-СН3	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α -acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	в-он	I	£ £	CH,
18) taxane Ic	taxsub	GH,	I	0	0=	р-сн,	α-acetyloxy	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	Ç	CH ₃
19) taxane Id	a-acetyloxy	氏 당	I	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	B-CH3	β-acetyloxy	I	α-ОН	epoxide	α-acetyloxy	р-он	I	S. L	ÇĤ
20) 7-epibaccatin III	а-ОН	CH ³	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	р-сн,	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	CH ₃	Ę,

Footnotes

(1) "ceph" denotes

"tax" denotes

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"taxsub" denotes

(2) "xylosyl" denotes

10 (3) " α " denotes the stereoposition of a stereomoiety below the plane of the taxane ring structure shown above

" β " denotes the stereoposition of a moiety above 15 the plane of the taxane ring structure shown above

(4) "oxetane" denotes the moiety

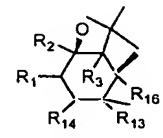
20 which is

5) "cyclo" denotes the cyclic group formed by bonding the group

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to the taxane

A ring as follows:



6) "epoxide" denotes the moiety



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which is



The term "taxol-associated cytotoxic biological activity" is intended to mean a cytotoxic activity which is sufficient to promote the assembly of tubulin and stabilizes the resulting microtubules of cancer cells causing the division of the cells in two equal daughter cells to be interrupted; and sufficient to cause a disruption in the dynamic equilibrium which exists between microtubules and their depolymerized tubulin dimers, thus preventing completion of the mitotic step which causes a lethal metaphase arrest of cancer cells.

The expression "cancer cells" is intended to mean any cancer cells which include without limitation, ovarian, breast, lung, head and neck cancer cells.

The term "growth supporting nutrient medium" is intended to mean any culture media which include, without limitation, carbon sources, nitrogen sources, amino acids, vitamins and minerals.

The term "intercalating agent" is intended to mean any molecule binding to the double stranded DNA structure which include, without limitation, daunorubicine, ethidium bromide, acridine orange, acriflavine and epirubicine.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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Fig. 1A shows the elution profile, according to HPLC method no. 1, of an organic supernatant extract of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Sphingomonas taxi;

Fig. 1B illustrates the UV spectra of paclitaxel obtained from a standard and of an organic extract of supernatant of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Sphingomonas taxi;

Fig. 2A illustrates a typical chromatogram of an organic extract of the supernatant of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi using HPLC method no. 2;

Fig. 2B illustrates the ultraviolet spectrum of paclitaxel produced by *Bacillus cereus* ssp. *taxi* compared to a paclitaxel standard;

Fig. 2C illustrates the ultraviolet spectrum of 7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol produced by Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi compared to an authentic standard co-eluting with taxinine M;

Fig. 3A illustrates a typical chromatogram of an organic extract of the supernatant of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as *Pantoea* sp. BCM 1 using HPLC

method no. 2;

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Fig. 3B illustrates the ultraviolet spectrum of 7-epi-10-deacetyltaxol produced by *Pantoea* sp. BCM 1 compared to an authentic standard;

Fig. 4A illustrates a typical chromatogram of an organic extract of the supernatant of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxiusing HPLC method no. 2;

Fig. 4B illustrates the ultraviolet spectrum of the bacterial paclitaxel produced by Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi compared to an authentic standard;

Fig. 5A illustrates a typical chromatogram of an organic extract of the supernatant of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as *Bacillus cereus* ssp. BCM 4 using HPLC method no. 2;

Fig 5B shows a substance having the characteristic ultraviolet spectrum of a taxane compared to a standard of 7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol co-eluting with taxinine M;

Fig. 6 illustrates the cytotoxicity of organic extracts of microorganisms isolated from different species of *Taxus* on CRL-1572 cell line as well as the cytotoxicity of taxanes and paclitaxel negative bacteria (STJ.BRP.K1 and *E. coli* TG1);

Fig. 7A illustrates the mass spectrometry of the substances eluted between 45 and 48 minutes using HPLC method no. 1 from an extract of Sphingomonas taxi;

Fig. 7B illustrates the mass spectrometry of a paclitaxel standard;

Fig. 8A illustrates the almost complete 16S rRNA

gene sequence of Sphingomonas taxi (SEQ ID NO:1);

Fig. 8B illustrates the almost complete 16S rRNA gene sequence of *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi (SEQ ID NO:2);

Fig. 8C illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi (SEQ ID NO:3);

Fig. 8D illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of *Pantoea* sp. BCM 1 (SEQ ID NO:4);

Fig. 8E illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of *Bacillus cereus* ssp. BCM 4 (SEQ ID NO:5);

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Fig. 8F illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi (SEQ ID NO:6);

Fig. 8G illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as *Pantoea* sp. BCM 2 (SEQ ID NO:7);

Fig. 8H illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Pantoea sp. BCM 3 (SEQ ID NO:8);

Fig. 8I illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9 (SEQ ID NO:9);

Fig. 8J illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5 (SEQ ID NO:10);

Fig. 8K illustrates the partial 16S rRNA gene

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sequence of a bacteria in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, referred to as Sphingomonas sp. BCM 7 (SEQ ID NO:11);

Fig. 9A illustrates a typical chromatogram of an organic extract from the supernatant of *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi producing a specific bacterial taxane using HPLC method no. 2;

Fig. 9B illustrates the ultraviolet spectrum of the characteristic taxane produced by *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi;

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Fig. 10A illustrates the GC/MS (EI) spectrum of the purified specific bacterial taxane produced by Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 10B illustrates the mass-to-charge ratios of ions present in the EI mass spectra of the bacterial taxane produced by Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi;

Fig. 11A shows the evolution in time of two taxanes in the sterile culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis* incubated at 150 rpm at 30°C;

Fig. 11B shows the evolution of two taxanes transformed by Sphingomonas taxi when cultured in the culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis, shaken at 150 rpm at 30°C;

Fig. 12 shows the HPLC chromatograms of *S. taxi* cultured in the S-7 culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis* where sample name 8A represents the organic extract of the culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis*, sample name S 24 hres represents the organic extract of *Sphingomonas taxi* incu-

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bated 24 hours in the culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis, sample name S 48 hres represents the organic extract of Sphingomonas taxi incubated 48 hours in the culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis, and sample name S 72 hres represents the organic extract of Sphingomonas taxi incubated 72 hours in the culture medium supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis;

Fig. 13 compares HPLC chromatograms of the supernatant extracts of S. taxi (sample name: S 48 hres), S. taxi D200 (sample name: SC 48 hres) and S. Taxi D201 (sample name: SCP 48 hres) cultured 48 hours in the medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis, and the organic 15 extract of the medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis (sample name 8A); and

Figs. 14A-14C show the characteristic ultraviolet spectrum of the new biotransformed pro-taxanes. 20

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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Plants are hosts of a variety of microorganisms. The relation between the plant and the microorganism can be saprophytic, parasitic, endophytic or symbiotic. Whatever the relation, there may be genetic exchange between the species. Taxus, such as Taxus canadensis, which grows in some regions of the province of Quebec, shows significant amounts of paclitaxel in its needles and stems. Samples of Taxus canadensis from seven (7) regions of the province of Quebec were chosen as well as samples of different species of Taxus such as Taxus WO 99/32651 - 19 - PCT/CA98/01150

brevifolia, T. cuspidata, T. baccata, T. hunnewelliana. Several different bacteria of different genus, such as Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea, and Curtobacterium were isolated from inner parts of samples from different species of Taxus, and all demonstrated taxanes and/or paclitaxel-producing properties.

Bacteria described above, produced taxanes and paclitaxel in fermentation procedures. Bacteria are cultured in a appropriate growth supporting nutrient medium containing ingredients known to those skilled in the art for the cultivation of microorganisms. Specific examples of appropriate such media are given below. Temperature of cultivation ranges from 10°C to 35°C, and aerobic cultivation is generally preferred.

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Taxanes and paclitaxel are generally excreted in the supernatant, up to 10% of those substances remain in the cell. Taxanes and paclitaxel thereof may be extracted by performing an organic extraction with an appropriate solvents such as methylene chloride or ethyl acetate.

In accordance with the present invention, various bacteria producing taxanes and paclitaxel were isolated from different species of *Taxus*.

One bacterium isolated from Taxus canadensis
25 allows for the production of taxanes and paclitaxel at
a yield of 1 µg/L, referred to as Sphingomonas taxi,
has been already deposited at the American Type Culture
Collection but was identified as Erwinia taxi (ATCC,
12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852 USA) on April
30 25, 1995 under deposit number ATCC 55669. The deposit
is also available as required by Foreign Patent laws in

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countries wherein counterpart applications are filed.

The other strains of the present invention have been deposited at the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, 12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852 USA) on December 18, 1997 under deposit accession numbers as set forth below. The deposit are also available as required by Foreign Patent laws in countries wherein counterpart applications are filed.

Strain	ATCC No.
Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi	202061
Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi	202062
Curtobacterium sp. BCM5	202063
Pantoea sp. BCM2	202064
Bacillus megaterium BCM9	202065
Bacillus cereus BCM4	202066
Sphingomonas taxi D201	202067
Sphingomonas taxi D200	202068
Sphingomonas sp. BCM7	202069
Pantoea sp. BCM3	202070
Pantoea sp. BCM1	202071
Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi	202072

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In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the bacteria isolated from different species of Taxus allow for the production of taxanes and paclitaxel thereof at a yield of 1 to 25 $\mu g/L$.

In accordance with the present invention, the bacteria isolated from different species of *Taxus* may be employed for the biotransformation of pro-taxanes.

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Isolation of the different microorganisms producing taxanes and paclitaxel

Each plant was divided into 5 parts; needles, twigs, stems, bark and roots. Each inner part of the plant was verified for the presence of taxanes and paclitaxel producing microorganisms.

The surface of every part of the plant was sterilized with 95% ethanol and then, cut into small pieces with a sterile blade. Pieces were homogenized in sterile water with a POLYTRON™ that had also been sterilized with ethanol 95%. The resulting mix was used to inoculate two different culture media; R2A agar (Difco) and Sabouraud agar (Difco).

Each plate was incubated at 22°C and examined on a day-to-day basis. The morphology of each colony was meticulously noted and the bacteria were transferred on different media until a pure culture was obtained. A Gram coloration of every bacteria was done before the culture was frozen at -80°C.

Over 50 bacteria were isolated from different samples of Taxus canadensis of the province of Quebec. In addition, over 30 different bacteria were isolated from different species of Taxus which include, without limitations, Taxus brevifolia, T. baccata, T. cuspidata, T. hunnewelliana. Some of them, showing taxanes and paclitaxel production capacities, will be fully described below.

Screening of microorganisms

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In order to verify the production of taxanes and paclitaxel by microorganisms, each organism was cultured in at least 500 ml of a growth supporting nutrient medium. Any liquid medium allowing taxanes and

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paclitaxel thereof production may be employed. Exemplary liquid media are S-7 media (Table 2), and defined media for *Bacillus* (Table 3). Every culture was performed in culture flasks and incubated at a temperature ranging from 20°C to 35°C with constant shaking until a sufficient growth was achieved, generally 18 to 72 hres.

Table 2
Composition of S-7 medium

Compounds	g/L		
glucose	1		
fructose	3		
sucrose	6		
sodium acetate	1		
soytone	1		
thiamine	0,001		
biotine	0,001		
pyridoxal-HCl	0,001		
Ca pantothenate	0,001		
MgSO ₄	0,0036		
CaNO ₃	0,0065		
Cu (NO ₃) ₂	0,001		
ZnSO ₄	0,0025		
MnCl ₂	0,005		
FeCl ₃	0,002		
phenylalanine	0,005		
sodium benzoate	0,1		
KH ₂ PO ₄ 1M (pH 6,8)	1 ml		

Table 3
Composition of the defined medium for Bacillus

Compounds	g/L
L-glutamic acid	10
glucose	5
citric acid	1
K ₂ HPO ₄	0,5
KH ₂ PO ₄	0,5
$MgSO_4 - 7H_2O$	0,2
$MnSO_4 - 4H_2O$	0,01
FeSO ₄ -7H ₂ O	0,01

The culture was then centrifuged and the pellet separated from the supernatant by decantation. ify if taxanes and paclitaxel were secreted in the medium or if it was confined within the cells, both were tested for the presence of the drug. Since taxanes and paclitaxel are hydrophobic, and in order to concentrate each sample, an extraction with an organic 10 solvent was performed. For the pellet, the cells were dried and about 200 mg were powdered and ultrasonicated twice for 40 minutes in 3 ml methanol. The extracts were dried at 25°C. The residue was dissolved by adding 2 ml of methylene chloride and 2ml of distilled 15 water. After appropriate shaking, the mixture was centrifuged at 4 000 rpm for 5 min. The methylene chloride fraction was collected and dried under reduced pressure. Finally, the residue is dissolved in 0,5 ml 20 of HPLC grade methanol.

The supernatant is extracted with one volume of methylene chloride. After appropriate shaking, the

organic fraction is evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. The residue is then resolubilized in 50 ml of methylene chloride and 50 ml of distilled water. After appropriate shaking, each fraction was collected and dried under reduced pressure. Each residue is dissolved in a measured minimal volume of HPLC grade methanol. All samples were kept frozen at -20°C.

a) HPLC screening

10 HPLC method no. 1

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Some extracts were analyzed by High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) on a system consisting of a WATERS™ 625 LC pump, a WATERS™ 996 photodiode array spectrophotometer, and a WATERS™ 717plus autosampler. Chromatography was performed with a phenyl column from

15 Chromatography was performed with a phenyl column from Waters (5μ m particle size, 6 mm X 15 mm) with a guard module. The injection volume varies from 50 to 150 μ l and the flow rate maintained at 1 ml/min. The following elution program was used;

0 to 20 min.: methanol:water:acetonitrile
(20:65:15) ramped to methanol:water:acetonitrile
(20:45:35)

20 to 50 min.: methanol:water:acetonitrile (20:45:35)
ramped to methanol:water:acetonitrile
(20:25:55)

50 to 60 min.: methanol:water:acetonitrile (20:25:55) ramped to methanol 100%

Table 4 identifies the retention times of known authentic standards on HPLC methods no. 1 and no. 2. Using HPLC no. 1, paclitaxel has a retention time of 46 minutes. In Fig. 1, we show the ultraviolet spectrum

of paclitaxel produced by Sphingomonas taxi. The spectrum is very characteristic with a second maximum of absorption at 230nm. This figure illustrates that Sphingomonas taxi produces a compound having the same retention time and the same UV spectrum as paclitaxel.

HPLC method no. 2

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Some extracts were analyzed on the same HPLC system with a curosil-PFP column (250 mm X 3.2 mm) from Phenomenex with a guard module. Injections varied from 50 ul to 150 ul and the flow rate maintained at 0.8 ml/min. The following gradient program was used;

0 to 50 min.: acetonitrile:water (25:75) ramped to acetonitrile:water (65:35)

50 to 62.5 min.: acetonitrile:water (65:35) ramped to methanol 100%

62.5 to 65 min.: methanol 100% to acetonitrile:water (25:75)

65 to 75 min.: acetonitrile:water (25:75)

As shown in Table 4, using HPLC method no. 2, 20 paclitaxel is eluted at 36.987 minutes.

Table 4

Retention time of taxanes standards using HPLC methods no. 1 and no. 2

Taxanes	Retention	time using
	HPLC method no. 1	HPLC method no. 2
10-deacetyl baccatin III	n/a	12.037 min.
baccatin III	n/a	20.670 min.
7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol B	n/a	24.870 min.
7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol and taxinine M	n/a	27.120 min.
7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol C	n/a	28.770 min.
10-deacetyltaxol and 7-xylosyltaxol	n/a	30.770 min.
cephalomannine	n/a	34.753 min.
7-epi-10-deacetyltaxol	n/a	35.703 min.
paclitaxel	46 minutes	36.987 min.
taxol C	n/a	38.853 min.
7-epitaxol	n/a	42.287 min.

Fig. 2A shows a typical chromatogram of an organic extract of *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi, and in Figs. 2B and 2C there is compared the UV spectra of the substances produced by *Bacillus* with authentic commercial plant standards. This figure clearly illustrates the ability of *Bacillus cereus* ssp. taxi to produce paclitaxel and 7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol.

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Fig. 3A shows the typical HPLC chromatogram of the supernatant of *Pantoea* sp. BCM 1 and, in Fig. 3B there is compared the bacterial 7-epi-10-deacetyltaxol against an authentic commercial plant standard, establishing the production of 7-epi-10-deacetyltaxol by *Pantoea* sp. BCM 1.

Fig. 4A shows a typical chromatogram of Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi and, in Fig. 4B there is compared the ultraviolet spectrum of the bacterial paclitaxel

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with an authentic standard proving the capacity of this bacterium to produce paclitaxel.

Fig. 5A shows a typical chromatogram of Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4 and, Fig 5B shows a substance having the characteristic ultraviolet spectrum of a taxane compared to a standard of 7-xylosyl-10-deacetyltaxol co-eluting with taxinine M, proving the capacity of Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4 to produce taxanes.

b) Cytotoxicity on cancer cells

An ovarian cancer cell line obtained from Ameri-10 Type Culture Collection (12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852 USA) under ATCC accession number CRL-1572) was chosen for the investigation. Briefly, 2 000 cells/well of a 96-well microplate were inoculated. After 2 days, different dilutions of the drug were 15 added in a volume of 100 µl. Three days later, the viability of cells was measured with ALAMAR™ blue (B. Pagé et al. 1993, Intl. J. of Oncology, <u>3</u>:473-476). The ATCC CRL-1572 cell line is particularly sensitive to paclitaxel (ID₅₀ of 1 ng/ml). Microbial extracts have also been tested for their cytotoxicity on those cells. Fig. 6 shows the cytotoxicity of different bacterial supernatant extracts. This figure clearly demonstrates that culture supernatant extracts from Sphingomonas taxi and Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi are at least 25 5-fold more cytotoxic than extracts from non-paclitaxel producing bacteria such as STJ.BRP.K1 and E. coli TG1.

c) Mass spectrometry

Mass spectrometry of the substances eluted between 45 and 48 minutes with HPLC method no.1 from an

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extract of Sphingomonas taxi was performed. Fig. 7A shows the results obtained. In every sample, a substance with a molecular weight (M.W.) of 853,5 daltons The theoretical M.W. of paclitaxel is 854 appears. daltons. Even if these extracts were partially purified, essentially the major compound obtained is paclitaxel.

Characterization of a bacterial taxane by EI/MS d)

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Fig. 9A, shows a typical chromatogram of Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi producing a characteristic taxane having a retention time of 15 minutes using HPLC method In Fig. 9B, the characteristic ultraviolet spectrum of this substance is illustrated. It was purified on HPLC using HPLC method no. 2 and, analyzed 15 in Electro Ionization Mass Spectrometry (EI/MS) as described by Thomas D. McClure et al. (J. Am. Soc. Mass Spectrom., 1992, 3, pp. 672-679).

Fig. 10A shows the EI spectrum of this taxane and Fig. 10B shows the characteristic fragments of this 20 taxane. Since this taxane has never been observed in plant extracts of different species of Taxus, and this compound is produced by at least two species of Bacillus (cereus ssp. taxi and megaterium ssp. taxi), we consider this novel taxane unique to microorganisms 25 isolated from Taxus.

Characterization of taxane and paclitaxel producing microorganisms

30 a) Biochemical and physiological characteristics

Table 5 shows the species of Taxus from which each bacterium was isolated, the Gram coloration, the

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morphology of colonies on different culture media and, some biochemical characteristics. This Table clearly illustrates the diversity of our taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria i.e. we have isolated and identified Gram-negative and Gram-positive rods including Actinomycetes from different species of Taxus which all possess taxanes and/or paclitaxel producing capacities.

Table 5

Cellular, morphological and biochemical characteristics of some taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria

Name	Isolated from	Gram	Cellular morphology	Description of colonies on blood agar	Description of colonies on TA-1	Catalase	Urease
Sphingomonas taxi	Taxus canadensis	•	Rod	No growth	3 days to grow Orange-Opaque Glossy-Convexe Circular contour	+	
Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi	Taxus canadensis	+	Rod	Double hemolysis Gray-green- Opaque Dry-Dull-Flat Irregular edge	Cream- Opaque Dry-Dull-Flat Irregular edge	+	-
Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi	Taxus hunnewelliana	+	Rod	Gray- Opaque Dry-Dull Convex Irregular edge	Cream- Opaque Glossy Slightly convex Irregular edge	+	-
Pantoea sp. BCM 1	Taxus hunnewelliana	•	Rod	Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	Cream with yellow pigment in middle Opaque-Glossy- Flat Regular edge	+	-
Pantoea sp. BCM 2	Taxus cuspidata	-	Rod	Yellow Opaque Glossy-Flat Regular edge	Yellow Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	+	-
Pantoea sp. BCM 3	Taxus cuspidata	<u>-</u>	Rod	Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	Yellow Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	+	•
Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4	Taxus brevifolia	+	Rod	Double hemolysis Gray-green- Opaque Dry-Dull-Flat Irregular edge	Cream- Opaque Dry-Duli-Flat Irregular edge	+	-
Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi	Taxus baccata	+	Rod	Semi-translucent Dry, Dull Convex Regular edge	Cream- Translucent Dry, Dull Convex Regular edge	+	-
Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9	Taxus hunnewelliana	+	Rod	Gray- Opaque Dry-Dull Convex Irregular edge	Cream- Opaque Glossy Slightly convex Irregular edge	+	-
Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5	Taxus brevifolia	+	Rod	2 days to grow Cream Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	2 days to grow Yellow Semi-translucent Glossy-Flat Regular edge	+	-
Sphingomonas sp. BCM 7	Taxus hunnewelliana	÷	Rod	No growth	3 days to grow Orange-Opaque Glossy-Convex Regular edge	+	-

b) Identification of the genus of taxanes and paclitaxel producing microorganisms

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The genus of each taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria was determined by sequencing the 16S

rRNA genes. Genomic DNA of each strain was used as template for PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction). Primers based on conserved regions at the beginning and the gene, SSU-27 (5 '-16S rRNA end of the AGAGTTTGATCMTGGCTCAG-3'; SEQ ID NO:12), and SSU-1 492 (5'-TACGGYTACCTTGTTACGACTT-3'; SEQ ID NO:13), were used to amplify a portion of the 16S gene. The amplicons were purified with the "PCR purification kit" (sold by Qiagen) and sequenced using the ABI Prism System. Sequence analysis was performed using GCG software package (Genetics Computer Group Inc., Madison, WI).

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Fig. 8A shows the almost complete sequence of the 16S rRNA gene of Sphingomonas taxi. Since this strain has unique biosynthetic capacities and more than 3% sequence difference with the 16S rRNA genes of other known species of Sphingomonas, we created a new species and named it taxi on the behalf of its isolation source. Fig. 8B shows the almost complete sequence of the 16S rRNA gene of Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi. Since this bacterium possesses unique metabolic capacities, and in order to differentiate this species from other known Bacillus cereus, we identified it by subspecies name taxi also on the behalf of its isolation source. In Figs. 8C to 8L, we show partial sequences of the 16S rRNA genes of other taxanes and/or paclitaxel producing microorganisms.

Consequently, in accordance with the present invention, a plurality of bacteria isolated from different species of *Taxus* can be used for the mass production of paclitaxel and other taxanes. Based on the analysis of partial 16S rRNA gene sequences, and morphological and biochemical characteristics, we assigned

the following genera, species, and subspecies or strain names to our paclitaxel and taxanes producing bacterial isolates; Sphingomonas taxi, Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi, Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi, Pantoea sp. BCM 1, Pantoea sp. BCM 2, Pantoea sp. BCM 3, Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4, Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi, Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9, Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5 and Sphingomonas sp. BCM 7.

10 Biotransformation of taxanes

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a) Preparation of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis

Fresh cuttings of needles and small twigs (10 g) of a sample of *Taxus canadensis* are homogenized in 100 ml of distilled water. The solution is then centrifuged at 7 000 rpm and the clear supernatant sterilized by filtration on a 0,22 μ m filter. The solution is kept frozen at -20°C until utilization.

20 b) Biotransformation of taxanes by taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria

The growth supporting nutrient medium S-7 is supplemented with 1% v/v on an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis. This resulting supplemented medium is then inoculated with a thawed vial of a pure culture of one of our strain and incubated at 30°C with constant shaking for a time sufficient to allow biotransformation of pro-taxanes.

The culture is then centrifuged and the remaining supernatant extracted with one volume of methylene
chloride or ethyl acetate. After appropriate shaking,
the organic fraction is evaporated to dryness under
reduced pressure. The residue is then resolubilized in

of distilled water. After appropriate shaking, each fraction was collected and dried under reduced pressure. Each residues is dissolved in a measured minimal volume of HPLC grade methanol. All samples were kept frozen at -20°C until analysis.

Samples were analyzed on HPLC using method no.

2. Fig. 11 shows the evolution of two taxanes in A) the sterile culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis shaken at 150 rpm and incubated at 30°C, and in B) the supernatant of Sphingomonas taxi cultured in the culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis shaken at 150 rpm and incubated at 30°C. This figure clearly illustrates that in the supernatant of Sphingomonas taxi, the diminution of the taxane eluted at 12 minutes corresponds to the proportional elevation of the taxane eluted at 24 minutes, proving the capacity of Sphingomonas taxi to biotransform taxanes.

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In addition, Fig. 12 compares the HPLC chromatogram of the organic extract of the culture supernatant of *S. taxi* incubated 24, 48 and 72 hours in the culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis*. This Fig. 12 clearly illustrates the production of pro-taxanes. The ultaviolet spectrum of one of these pro-taxanes is illustrated in Fig. 14A. Fig. 14A compares the UV spectrum of the new biotransformed taxane produced by *S. taxi* with taxanes from the aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis*.

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Mutagenesis of taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria

Typically, 20 ml of the culture medium TA-1 with 200 $\mu g/ml$ of daunorubicin (purchased from Rhône-Poulenc) were inoculated with 500 μl of an overnight culture. The resulting broth was incubated at 200 rpm at 30°C for 2 days. After this time 10 ml of the broth are added to 10 ml of fresh medium containing 200 $\mu g/ml$ of daunorubicin and incubated as described above. The preceding step is repeated as necessary to obtain mutated bacteria. Those mutants were further isolated on the solid culture medium TA-1 (composition as follows).

Solid culture medium TA-1

Ingredient	amount
glucose	5 g
tryptone	20 g
yeast extract	5 g
NaCl	0.5 g
agar	15 g
H ₂ O	1 L

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Biotransformation of taxanes by mutated strains

The growth supporting nutrient medium S-7 is supplemented with 1% v/v on an aqueous extract of *Taxus canadensis*. This resulting supplemented medium is then inoculated with a thawed vial of a pure culture of one of our strain and incubated at 30°C with constant shaking for a time sufficient to allow biotransformation of pro-taxanes.

The culture is then centrifuged and the remain-25 ing supernatant extracted with one volume of methylene WO 99/32651 PCT/CA98/01150

chloride or ethyl acetate. After appropriate shaking, the organic fraction is evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. The residue is then resolubilized in 50 ml of methylene chloride or ethyl acetate, and 50 ml of distilled water. After appropriate shaking, each fraction was collected and dried under reduced pressure. Each residues is dissolved in a measured minimal volume of HPLC grade methanol. All samples were kept frozen at -20°C until analysis.

Samples were analyzed on HPLC using method no. 10 Fig. 13 shows HPLC chromatograms of S. taxi, S. taxi D200 and S. taxi D201 incubated the same time (48 hours) in the culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis. All cultures had comparable cell density. This figure 15 clearly illustrates the improved yields of biotransformation by the mutated strains S. taxi D200 and S. taxi In Figs. 14B and 14C the characteristic ultra-D201. violet spectrum of the new pro-taxanes, produced by the mutated strains S. taxi D200 and S. taxi D201, are com-20 pared with the UV spectrum of two taxanes from Taxus canadensis.

The present invention will be more readily understood by referring to the following examples which are given to illustrate the invention rather to limit its scope.

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EXAMPLE I

Mass production of paclitaxel using Sphingomonas taxi

A colony of a pure culture of Sphingomonas taxi
is used to inoculate 5 ml of S-7 culture medium. The
broth is incubated 2-3 days with constant shaking (90
rpm) at 22°C. This 5 ml is then transferred into 5

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liters of the same culture medium. The resulting broth is incubated as described above in aerobic conditions.

After 4-5 days of incubation, or after the maximum cell density is reached, the cell pellet is separated by centrifugation. Hydrophobic compounds are then extracted from the supernatant by partition with one volume of dichloromethane. Each organic fraction is evaporated to dryness and, the residue is solubilized in a minimal amount of HPLC grade methanol, typically 500 μ l to 1 ml.

Paclitaxel and taxanes are further purified by HPLC on a phenyl column using HPLC method no. 1. Typically, up to 400 μ l of the methanolic solution are injected and fractions of 0,5 ml to 1 ml are collected. Fractions containing paclitaxel or taxanes are evaporated to dryness.

Using this method, from 200 ng to 1 μ g of paclitaxel per liter of culture medium were purified.

EXAMPLE II

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Mass production of taxanes and paclitaxel using Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi

A thawed vial of a pure dense cell suspension of Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi is used to inoculate 500 ml of the defined medium for Bacillus. The broth is incubated 1 to 3 days with constant shaking (150 rpm) at 30°C. The cell pellet is then separated form the supernatant by centrifugation. Hydrophobic substances are extracted from the supernatant by an extraction with one volume of dichloromethane. The organic fraction is evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure,

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and residues resolubilized in a minimal amount of HPLC grade methanol.

Taxanes and paclitaxel are further purified on HPLC using method no. 2. Using this method, from 0,2 to 10 μg of paclitaxel can be produced, and from 0,2 to 15 μg of taxanes, including the specific bacterial taxane illustrated in Fig. 13B, can also be produced.

EXAMPLE III

10 Mass production of taxanes and paclitaxel using Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi

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A thawed vial of a pure dense cell suspension of Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi is used to inoculate 500 ml of the S-7 culture medium. The broth is incubated 1 to 3 days with constant shaking (150 rpm) at 30°C. The cell pellet is then separated form the supernatant by centrifugation. Hydrophobic substances are extracted from the supernatant by an extraction with one volume of dichloromethane. The organic fraction is evaporated residues under reduced pressure, and dryness to resolubilized in a minimal amount of HPLC grade methanol.

Taxanes and paclitaxel are further purified on HPLC using method no. 2. Using this method, from 1 to 12 µg of paclitaxel can be produced, and from 1 to 15 µg of taxanes, including the specific bacterial taxane illustrated in Fig. 13B, can also be produced.

EXAMPLE IV

30 Biotransformation of pro-taxanes by Sphingomonas taxi

The growth supporting nutrient medium S-7 is supplemented with 1% v/v on an aqueous extract of Taxus

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canadensis. This resulting supplemented medium is then inoculated with a thawed vial of a pure culture of one of Sphingomonas taxi and incubated at 30°C with constant shaking for 24 to 96 hours.

The culture is then centrifuged and the remaining supernatant extracted with one volume of methylene chloride. After appropriate shaking, the organic fraction is evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. The residue is then resolubilized in 50 ml of methylene chloride and 50 ml of distilled water. After appropriate shaking, the organic fraction is collected and dried under reduced pressure. The residue is dissolved in 500µl of HPLC grade methanol and 100 µl of the methanolic solution are analyzed on HPLC using method no. 2 and compared to the resulting chromatogram of the organic extract of the growth-supporting nutrient medium supplemented with and aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis $1 \ v/v$ shaken the same time.

As illustrated in Figs. 11, 12 and 14A, Sphin-gomonas taxi is able to biotransform taxanes into new pro-taxanes.

EXAMPLE V

Mutagenesis of Sphingomonas taxi

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of daunorubicin (purchased from Rhône-Poulenc) were inoculated with 500 μ l of an overnight culture of Sphingomonas taxi. The resulting broth was incubated at 200 rpm at 30°C for 2 days. After this time 10 ml of the broth are added to 10 ml of fresh medium containing 200 μ g/ml of daunorubicin and incubated as described above. The preceding step is repeated as necessary to obtain mutated bacteria. Those mutants were further isolated on the solid culture medium TA-1. Two

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new mutated strains were obtained named Sphingomonas taxi D200 and Sphingomonas taxi D201.

EXAMPLE VI

Biotransformation of taxanes by Sphingomonas taxi D200 and Sphingomonas taxi D201

The growth supporting nutrient medium S-7 is supplemented with 1% v/v on an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis. This resulting supplemented medium is then inoculated with a thawed vial of a pure culture of one of our mutated strain and incubated at 30°C at 150 rpm. Cultures were stopped after 24, 48 and 72 hours of incubation.

Cultures were then centrifuged and the remaining supernatants extracted with one volume of ethyl acetate. After appropriate shaking, the organic fractions were evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. Residues were then resolubilized in 50 ml of ethyl acetate. After appropriate shaking, fractions were collected and dried under reduced pressure. Each residues were dissolved in a measured minimal volume of HPLC grade methanol. All samples were kept frozen at -20°C until analysis.

Samples were analyzed on HPLC using method no.

25 2. Fig. 13 shows HPLC chromatograms of S. taxi, S. taxi D200 and S. taxi D201 incubated the same time (48 hours) in the culture medium S-7 supplemented with 1% v/v of an aqueous extract of Taxus canadensis. All cultures had comparable cell densities. This figure clearly illustrates the improved yields of biotransformation by the mutated strains S. taxi D200 and S. taxi D201. In Fig. 14B the characteristic ultraviolet spec-

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trum of the new pro-taxanes produced by *S. taxi* D200 is compared with the UV spectrum of two taxanes from *Taxus* canadensis. Fig. 14C compares the UV spectrum of the new biotransformed taxane produce by *S. taxi* D201 with taxanes from the aqueous extract of *Taxus* canadensis.

While the invention has been described in connection with specific embodiments thereof, it will be understood that is capable of further modifications and this application is intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention following, in general, the principles of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice within the art to which the invention pertains and as many be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth, and as follows in the scope of the appended claims.

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American Type Culture Collection

12301 Parkiawn Drive . Rockville, MD 20852 USA . Telephone: 301-231-5519 or 231-5532 . FAX: 301-816-4366

BUDAPEST TREATY ON THE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE DEPOSIT OF MICROORGANISMS FOR THE PURPOSES OF PATENT PROCEDURE

INTERNATIONAL FORM

RECEIPT IN THE CASE OF AN ORIGINAL DEPOSIT ISSUED PURSUANT TO RULE 7.3 AND VIABILITY STATEMENT ISSUED PURSUANT TO RULE 10.2

To: (Name and Address of Depositor or Attorney)

BCM Developpement Inc.
Attn: Nathalie Landry
125 rue Dalhousie, suite 218
Quebec Canada G1K 4C5

REC'D 3 0 MAR 1999 WIPO PCT

Deposited on Behalf of: BCM Developpement

Identification Reference by Depositor:

ATCC Designation

Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi	202061
Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi	202062
Curtobacterium sp. BCM5	202063
Pantoea sp. BCM2	202064
Bacillus megaterium BCM9	202065
Bacillus cereus BCM4	202066

The deposits were accompanied by: ____ a scientific description X a proposed taxonomic description indicated above. The deposits were received <u>December 12, 1997</u> by this International Depository Authority and have been accepted.

AT YOUR REQUEST: X We will not inform you of requests for the strains.

The strains will be made available if a patent office signatory to the Budapest Treaty certifies one's right to receive, or if a U.S. Patent is issued citing the strains, and ATCC is instructed by the United States Patent & Trademark Office or the depositor to release said strains.

If the cultures should die or be destroyed during the effective term of the deposit, it shall be your responsibility to replace them with living cultures of the same.

The strains will be maintained for a period of at least 30 years from date of deposit, or five years after the most recent request for a sample, whichever is longer. The United States and many other countries are signatory to the Budapest Treaty.

The viability of the cultures cited above was tested <u>December 18, 1997</u>. On that date, the cultures were viable.

International Depository Authority: American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, Md. 20852 USA

Signature of person having authority to represent ATCC:

Barbara M. Hailey, Administrator, Patent Depository

Date: December 18, 1997

cc:

France Cote

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To: (Name and Address of Depositor or Attorney)

BCM Developpement Inc.
Attn: Nathalie Landry
125 rue Dalhousie, suite 218
Quebec Canada G1K 4C5

Deposited on Behalf of: BCM Developpement

Identification Reference by Depositor:

Sphingomonas taxi D201

Sphingomonas taxi D200

Sphingomonas taxi D200

Sphinogomonas sp. BCM7

Pantoea sp. BCM3

Pantoea sp. BCM1

Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi

ATCC Designation

202067

202067

202068

202070

202070

The deposits were accompanied by: ____ a scientific description X a proposed taxonomic description indicated above. The deposits were received <u>December 12, 1997</u> by this International Depository Authority and have been accepted.

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International Depository Authority: American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, Md. 20852 USA

Signature of person having authority to represent ATCC:

Barbara M. Hailey, Administrator, Patent Depository

France Cote

CC:

Date: December 18, 1997

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A process for producing a taxane, which comprises the steps of:
 - a) culturing at least one bacteria isolated from plant species of *Taxus* in growth-supporting nutrient medium capable of promoting growth and reproduction of said bacteria, and wherein said culturing is effected for a time sufficient to allow production of a taxane; and
 - b) recovering a taxane from said bacteria or medium of step a).
- The process of claim 1, wherein the plant species of Taxus is of the species selected from the group consisting of but not limited to Taxus canadensis, T. brevifolia, T. baccata, T. hunnewelliana or T. cuspidata.
- 3. The process of claim 1, wherein said bacteria is of the genus selected from the group consisting of Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea, and Curtobacterium.
- 4. The process of claim 1, wherein said taxane produced is paclitaxel.
- 5. The process of claim 1, wherein said taxane is selected from the group consisting of paclitaxel, 10-deacetylcephalomannine, 7-epitaxol, 10-deacetyl-7-epitaxol, 7-epicephalomannine, baccatin III, 10-deacetyl-baccatin III, cephalomannine, 7-epibaccatin III, 7-

xylosyltaxol, 7-xylosyl-cephalomannine, taxagifine, δ -benzoyloxy taxagifine, 9-acetyloxy taxusin, 9-hydroxy taxusin, taxane Ia, taxane Ib, taxane Ic, taxane Id and any taxane corresponding to Formula I:

$$R_{1}$$
 R_{1}
 R_{1}

wherein R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} , R_{16} , R_{17} are defined in Table 1.

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Compound	R, ⁽³⁾	82	%	~	Rs	R ₆ (3)	R,(2) R	R ₃ R ₁₇	R, R ₁₀ ⁽⁴⁾	R ₁₁	R ₁₂ ⁽⁶⁾	R ₁₃	8	R ₁₅ ⁽⁵⁾	R _{is}
1) paclitaxel	tax	CH ³	I	B-acetyloxy	0=	р-СН3	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	CH3	£
2) 10-deacetyl- cephalomannine	ceph	Ğ.	I	но-б	0=	β-CH ₃	но-б	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	Ę,	CH,
3) 7-epitaxol	tax	£	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	р-сн3	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	g-OH	I	CH	SH,
4) 10-deacetyl-7- epitaxol	tax	£	I	но-б	0=	β -СН ₃	ж-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	В-ОН	I	£	ਸੂੰ ਹ
5) 7-epi- cephalomannine	ceph	CH ₃	I	β-acetyloxy	O .	р-сн3	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	д-ОН	I :	ည် ိ	င်္ <u>ဗ</u> ိ
6) baccatin III	а-ОН	CH,	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	β-СН ₃	9-0Н	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	FOH TOH	I :	f S	င် ်
7) 10-deacetyl baccatin III	α-ОН	ŕ	I	но-я	0::	р-сн	р-он	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	д-ОН	Ι :	ည် ႏ	Ę į
8) cephalomannine	ceph	CH	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	β-СН ₃	но-я	I.	oxetane	a-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	B-0H	I	Ę	Ę.
9) 10-deacetyl taxol	tax	Ç H	I	в-он	0=	в-сн,	но-б	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-ОН	I	£	Ę,
10) 7-xylosyl taxol	tax	CH	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	р-сн	β-xylosyl	X	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-он	I	Ę.	£
11) 7-xylosył- cephałomannine	ceph	£ £	I	β-acetyloxy	0	р-сн3	β-xylosyl	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	B-0H	I	£	Ę Ę
12) taxagifine	0=	a-CH ₃	д-ОН	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	р-сн3	β-acetyloxy	I	α-cinnamoyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	α-acetyloxy	B-H	x	cyclo	α- CH ₃
13) 8-benzoyloxy- taxagifine	0	a- CH3	р-он	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	β-benzoyl- oxymethyl	β-acetyloxy	I	α-cinnamoyloxy	methylene (=CH ₂)	α-acetyloxy	H-d	I	cyclo	α- CH ₃
14) 9-acetyloxy-taxusin	α-acetyloxy	£	I	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	β-СН ₃	I	I	α-acetyloxy	(=CH ₂)	, I	I	I	ÇH,	Ę.
15) 9-hydroxy-taxusin	α-acetyloxy	ਸੂੰ	I	β-acetyloxy	а-ОН	β-СН ³	I	I	α-acetyloxy	(=CH ₂)	I	エ	I	Ę,	CH,
16) taxane la	tax	CH3	I	0=	O _{II}	в-сн3	ч-он	I.	oxetane	a-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	β-0H	I	Ę,	Ę
17) taxane lb	taxsub	£	I	0	0=	р-сн,	α-ОН	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	р-ОН	I	£	CH ₃
18) taxane Ic	taxsub	£	I	0=	0=	в-сн,	α-acetyloxy	I	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	В-ОН	I	Ę	Ę.
19) taxane Id	α-acetyloxy	CH³	I	β-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	р-сн3	B-acetyloxy	I	α-ОН	epoxide	α-acetyloxy	р-ОН	I	£	Ę.
20) 7-epibaccatin III	α-0H	Н	I	β-acetyloxy	0=	р-сн,	а-ОН	Ŧ	oxetane	α-acetyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	g-OH	エ	ਤੌਂ	ਮੁ

- 6. A bacterial taxane having the characterizing ultraviolet spectrum and the specific retention time shown in Fig. 13, and the EI spectrum shown in Fig. 14A.
- 7. The process of claim 1, wherein the taxane produced having the characterizing ultraviolet spectrum and the specific retention time shown in Fig. 13, and the EI spectrum shown in Fig. 14A.
- 8. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi.
- 9. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi.
- 10. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 1.
- 11. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 2.
- 12. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 3.
- 13. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4.
- 14. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi.

- 15. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9.
- 16. The process of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5.
- The process of claim 1, wherein said growth-supporting nutrient medium include carbon sources, nitrogen sources, amino acids, vitamins and minerals.
- 18. A process for producing biotransformed taxanes, which comprises the steps of:
 - a) culturing at least one bacteria isolated from plant species of *Taxus* in growth-supporting nutrient medium supplemented with pro-taxanes, and wherein said culturing is effected for a time sufficient to allow the biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes; and
 - b) recovering at least one from said bacteria or medium of step a).
- 19. The process of claim 18, wherein said taxane is selected from the group consisting of paclitaxel, 10-deacetylcephalomannine, 7-epitaxol, 10-deacetyl-7-epitaxol, 7-epicephalomannine, baccatin III, 10-deacetylbaccatin III, cephalomannine, 7-epibaccatin III, 7-xylosyltaxol, 7-xylosyl-cephalomannine, taxagifine, δ -benzoyloxy taxagifine, 9-acetyloxy taxusin, 9-hydroxy taxusin, taxane Ia, taxane Ib, taxane Ic, taxane Id and any taxane corresponding to Formula I:

$$R_{1}$$
 R_{1}
 R_{1}

wherein R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} , R_{12} , R_{13} , R_{14} , R_{15} , R_{16} , R_{17} are defined in Table 1,

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	8. 8.	L H J	Ę.	£ F	μ Έ	£ £	£ E	£ F	Ę Ę	된		GF.	α- CH ₃	α- CH ₃	CH ³	£	£	£	Ę,	CH,	CH ³
	R ₁₅ (5)	Ę.	£	CH ₃	£	Ę H	Ę.	£	Ğ H	ÇH,	CH3	CH ₃	cyclo	cyclo	CH ₃	Ç H	SH ₂	CH3	£	ਮੂੰ ਪੁ	CH ₃
	Ŗ.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	R ₁₃	β-ОН	β-ОН	р-он	р-он	д-он	в-он	д-он	р-ОH	B-0H	р-Он	9-0Н	β - Н	B-H	I	I	р-он	р-он	р-он	р-он	B-OH
	R ₁₂ ⁽⁶⁾	α-benzoyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	α -benzoyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	α-benzoyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	I	r	a-benzayloxy	a-benzoyloxy	a-benzoyloxy	a-acetyloxy	α-benzoyloxy
	R _{ff}	a-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	a-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	a-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	methylene	methylene (=CH ₂)	(=CH ₂)	methylene $(=CH_2)$	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	a-acetyloxy	epoxide	α-acetyloxy
	R, R, (4)	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	α -cinnamoyloxy	α-cinnamoyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	oxetane	oxetane	oxetane	α-ОН	oxetane
	R ₈ R ₁₇	エ	I	I	I	エ	I	I ·	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I.	I	I	I
Table 1	R, (2)	р-он	р-он	а-ОН	а-ОН	а-ОН	9-ОН	но-б	но-д	в-он	β-xylosyl	β-xylosyf	β-acetyloxy	ß-acetyloxy	I	I	α-ОН	а-0H	α-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	ж-ОН
Tal	R ₆ (3)	р-сн,	р-сн _з	р-сн3	р-сн3	р-сн,	β-СН ₃	β-СН ₃	β-СН ₃	B-CH ₃	р-сн	β-СН ₃	β-СН ₃	β-benzoyl- oxymethyl	β-СН ³	в-сн3	₿-CH₃	β-СН ₃	в-сн	в-СН 3	р-сн3
	Rs	O =	0=	0=	0=	0=	0	0=	0=	0	0=	0	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	α-acetyloxy	д-ОН	0	on O	0=	α-acetyloxy	0=
	Z	B-acetyloxy	но-б	β-acetyloxy	но-я	β-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	но-в	β-acetyloxy	B-0H	β-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	β-acetyloxy	ß-acetyloxy	0	0::	0=	B-acetyloxy	ß-acetyloxy
	ď	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	в-он	B-0H	I	工	I	I	I	I	I
	R ₂	CH3	CH,	£	CH,	CH,	CH,	CH3	£	CH ₃	, F	Fo	a- CH3	α- CH ₃	ČH ³	£	Ç I	£	ť	ĊĤ C	CH,
	R, ⁽³⁾	tax	ceph	tax	tax	qdeo	α-0H	α-ОН	ceph	tax	tax	ceph	0=	0	α-acetyloxy	a-acetyloxy	tax	taxsub	taxsub	α-acetyloxy	α-ОН
	Compound	1) paclitaxel	2) 10-deacetyl- cephalomannine	3) 7-epitaxol	4) 10-deacetyl-7- epitaxol	5) 7-epi- cephalomannine	6) baccatin III	7) 10-deacetyl baccatin III	8) cephalomannine	9) 10-deacetyl taxol	10) 7-xvlosvl taxol	11) 7-xylosyl- cephalomannine	12) taxagifine	13) 8-benzoyloxy-taxaqifine	14) 9-acetyloxy-	15) 9-hydroxy-taxusin	16) taxane la	17) taxane lb	18) taxane lc	19) taxane Id	20) 7-epibaccatin III

- 20. The process of claim 19, wherein said pro-tax-anes are isolated from any species of Taxus.
- The process of claim 19, wherein said pro-tax-anes are isolated from Taxus canadensis.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 1.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 2.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Pantoea sp. BCM 3.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi.
- 29. The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Bacillus megaterium ssp. BCM 9.
- The process of claim 19, wherein the bacteria is Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5.

- 31. A process for isolating taxanes and paclitaxel producing bacteria from a yew tree, which comprises the steps of:
 - a) disinfecting the surface of a yew tree plant part with a suitable disinfectant;
 - b) cutting and disrupting the disinfected plant part;
 - c) leaching out bacteria with an appropriate solvent from the part of step c);
 - d) culturing said leached bacteria on a solid growth-supporting nutrient medium for a time sufficient to allow formation of visible isolated colonies; and
 - e) screening said isolated colonies for production of taxanes and paclitaxel.
- The process of claim 31, wherein the disinfectant used is ethanol at concentration varying from 35% to 99%.
- 33. The process of claim 31, wherein the solvent to leach out bacteria is water.
- 34. The process of claim 31, wherein the solid growth-supporting nutrient medium for isolating colonies is selected from the group consisting of R2A agar (Difco) and Sabouraud (Difco).
- 35. The process of claim 31, wherein screening of isolated bacteria for taxanes and paclitaxel production comprises the steps of:

- a) culturing said isolated bacteria in 500 ml of a growth-supporting liquid nutrient medium at temperature ranging from 20 to 35°C with constant shaking until sufficient growth is achieved;
- b) obtaining the culture medium supernatant or the cells and extracting it with appropriate organic solvents selected from methylene chloride and ethyl acetate;
- c) analyzing said organic extracts by a method suitable for detection of taxanes and paclitaxel.
- The process of claim 35, wherein the method to detect taxanes and paclitaxel in extracts uses HPLC retention times on a hydrophobic chromatographic matrix and ultraviolet spectra to identify taxanes and paclitaxel in comparison with standards.
- 37. The process of claim 35, wherein the method to detect taxanes and paclitaxel in extracts uses cytotoxicity on cancer cell lines.
- 38. The process of claim 35, wherein the method to detect taxanes in extracts uses mass spectrometry to identify paclitaxel and taxanes based on molecular weights fragments and/or total molecule.
- The process of claim 35, wherein the method to detect taxanes and paclitaxel in extracts uses antibodies raised against taxanes and paclitaxel.
- 40. The process of claim 35, wherein the method to

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detect taxanes and paclitaxel uses an in vitro assay monitoring interaction of taxanes with tubulin.

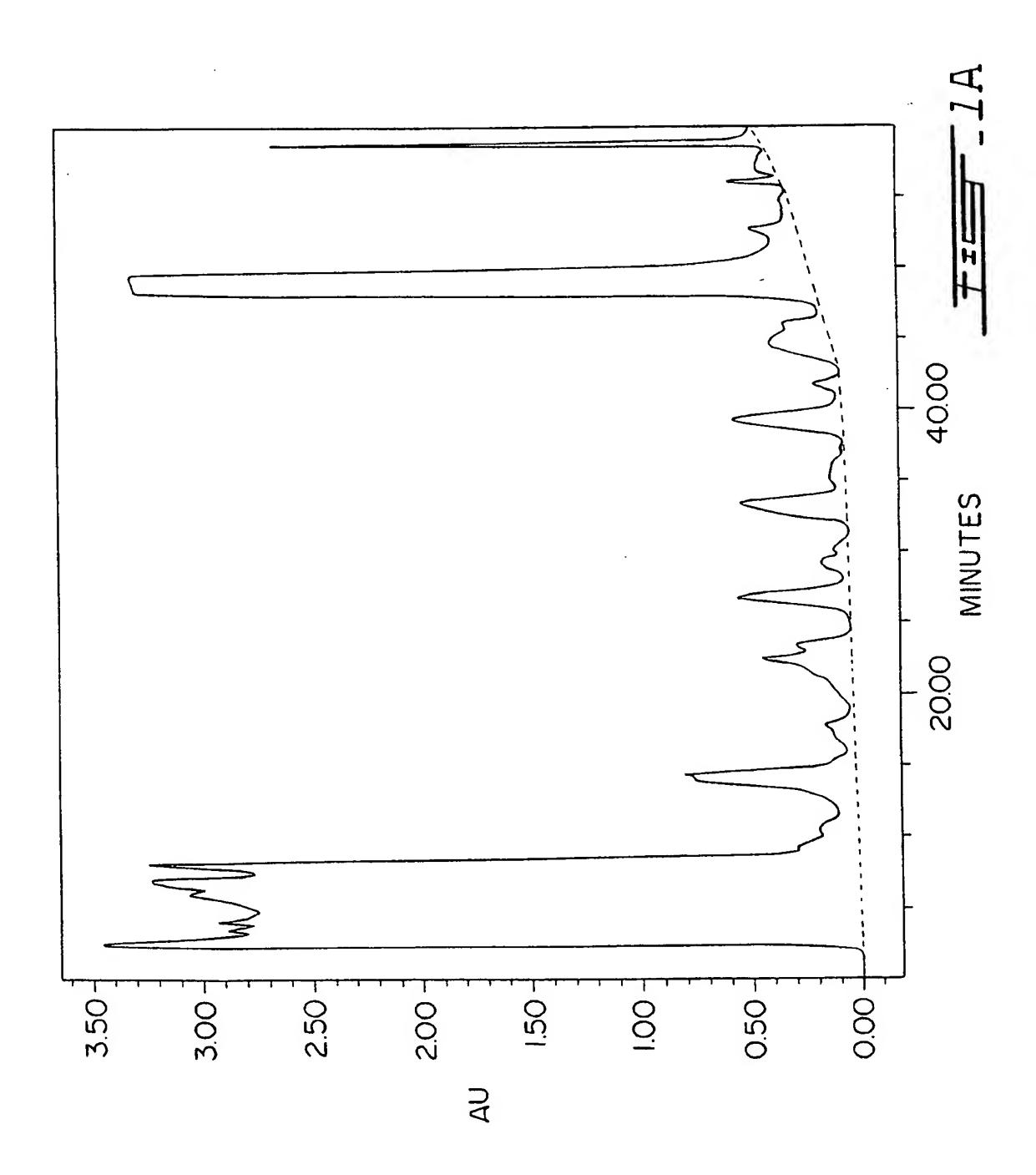
- 41. A process for improving biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel by taxanes and paclitaxel-producing bacteria comprising the steps of:
 - a) culturing bacteria in the presence of a mutagenic agent for a time sufficient to allow mutagenesis; and
 - b) selecting said mutants by a change of the phenotype which results in an increased biotransformation of pro-taxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel.
- The process of claim 41, wherein the mutagenic agent is a chemical agent.
- The process of claim 41, wherein the chemical agent is daunorubicin or nitrosoguanidine.
- The process of claim 41, wherein the mutagenic agent is a physical agent selected from gamma radiation or ultraviolet.
- The process of claim 41, wherein the mutagenic agent is a biological agent.
- 46. The process of claim 45, wherein the biological agent is a transposon.
- 47. A method of bacterial biotransformation of protaxanes into taxanes and paclitaxel thereof which com-

prises the steps of:

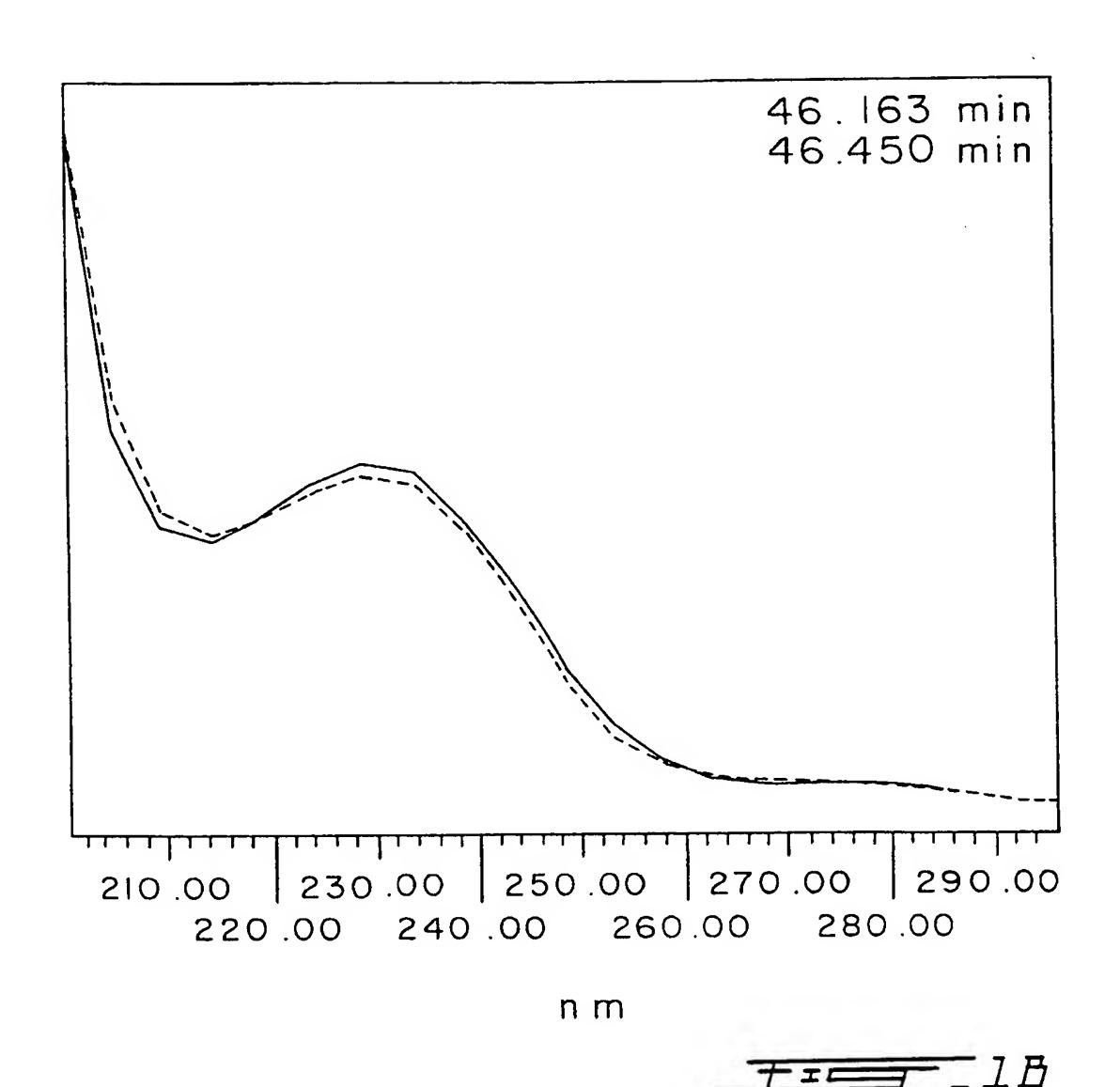
- a) incubating the mutated bacteria obtained according to the process of claim 41 in a nutrient medium, and wherein said incubation is effected in the presence of pro-taxanes for a time sufficient to allow production of taxanes and paclitaxel; and
- b) isolating said produced taxanes and paclitaxel thereof from said culturing medium of step a).
- 48. The process of claim 43, wherein the bacteria used is Sphingomonas taxi D200.
- The process of claim 43, wherein the bacteria used is Sphingomonas taxi D201.
- The process of claim 43, wherein the mutated bacterium is isolated from a Taxus species and is of the genus of Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea or Curtobacterium.
- 51. A biologically pure culture of a bacteria of genus Sphingomonas, Bacillus, Pantoea or Curtobacterium, which is isolated from Taxus canadensis, and wherein said bacteria is characterized by the production of taxane and paclitaxel in a culture media.
- The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, which is Sphingomonas taxi, Bacillus cereus ssp. taxi, Bacillus megaterium ssp. taxi, Pantoea sp. BCM 1, Pantoea sp. BCM 2, Pantoea sp. BCM 3, Bacillus cereus ssp. BCM 4, Bacillus subtilis ssp. taxi, Bacil-

lus megaterium ssp. BCM 9 and Curtobacterium sp. BCM 5.

- The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, wherein the bacteria is of the genus *Sphingo-monas*, belonging to the alpha subdivision of Proteobacteria.
- The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, wherein the bacteria is of the genus *Bacillus* belonging to the low G+C Gram positive bacteria.
- The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, wherein the bacteria is of the genus *Pantoea*, belonging to the gamma subdivision of Proteobacteria.
- The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, wherein the bacteria is of the genus is isolated from a *Taxus* species and is of the genus *Curto-bacterium*, belonging to the Actinomycetes order of the firmicutes.
- 57. The biologically pure culture of the bacteria of claim 51, wherein said bacteria is mutated and is Sphingomonas taxi D200 or Sphingomonas taxi D201.

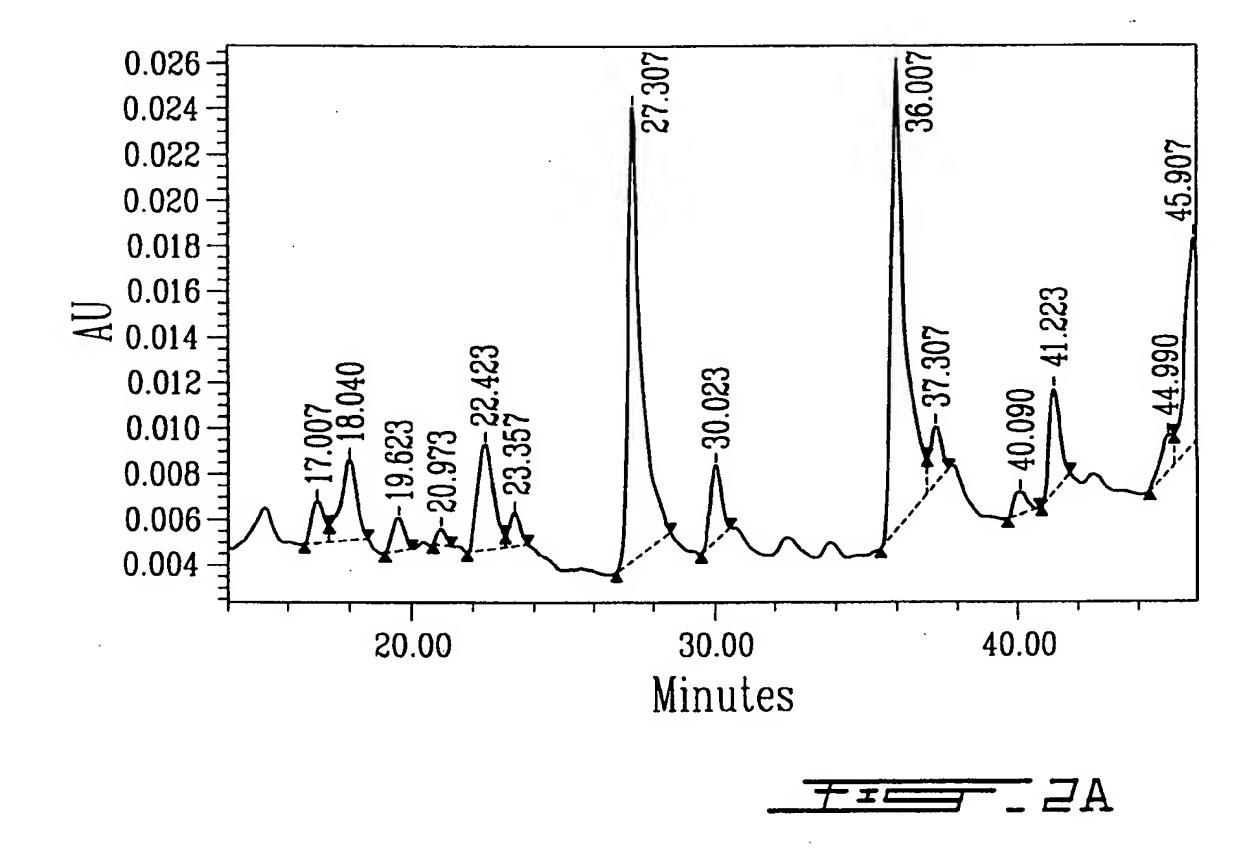


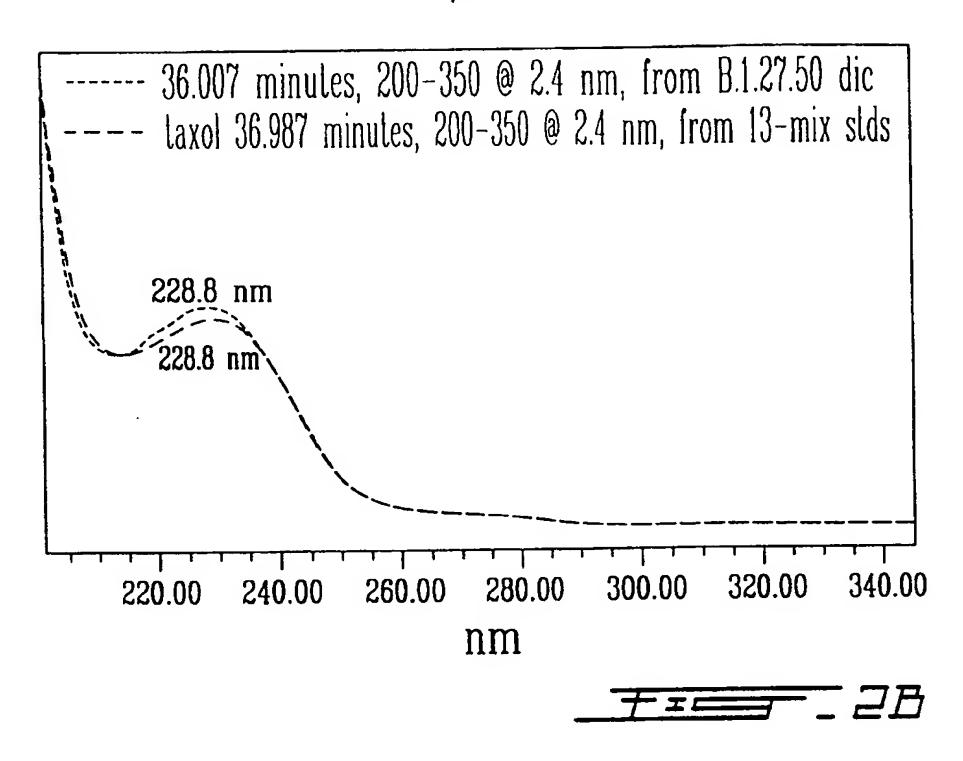
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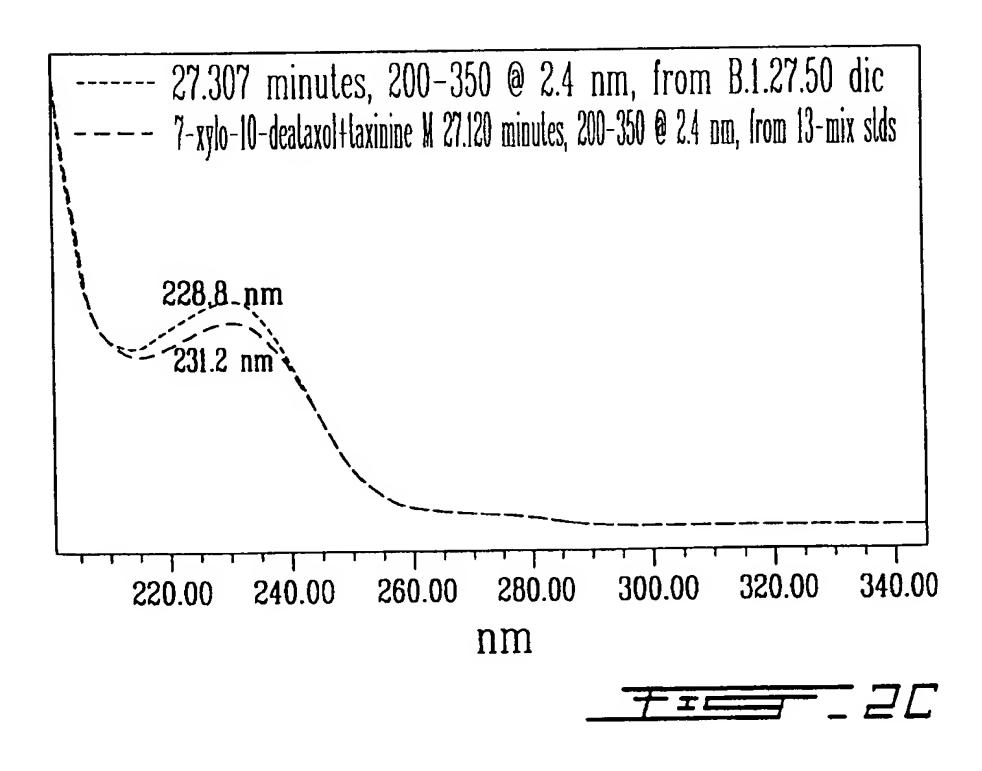


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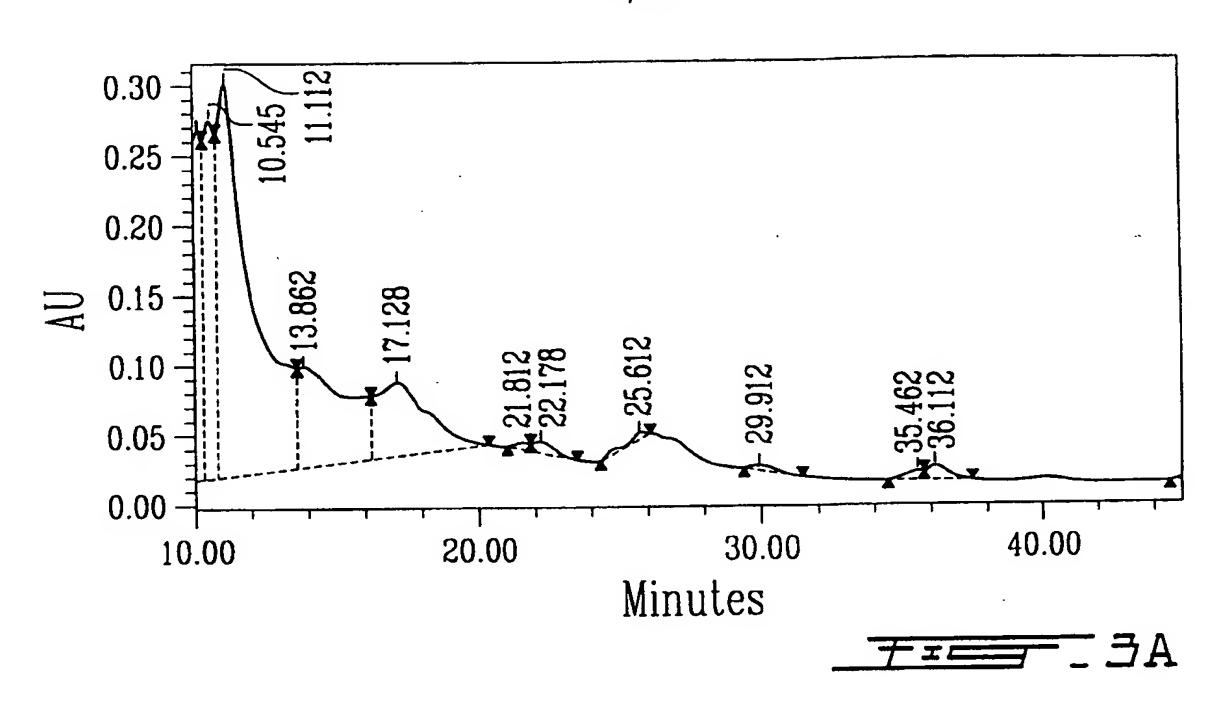


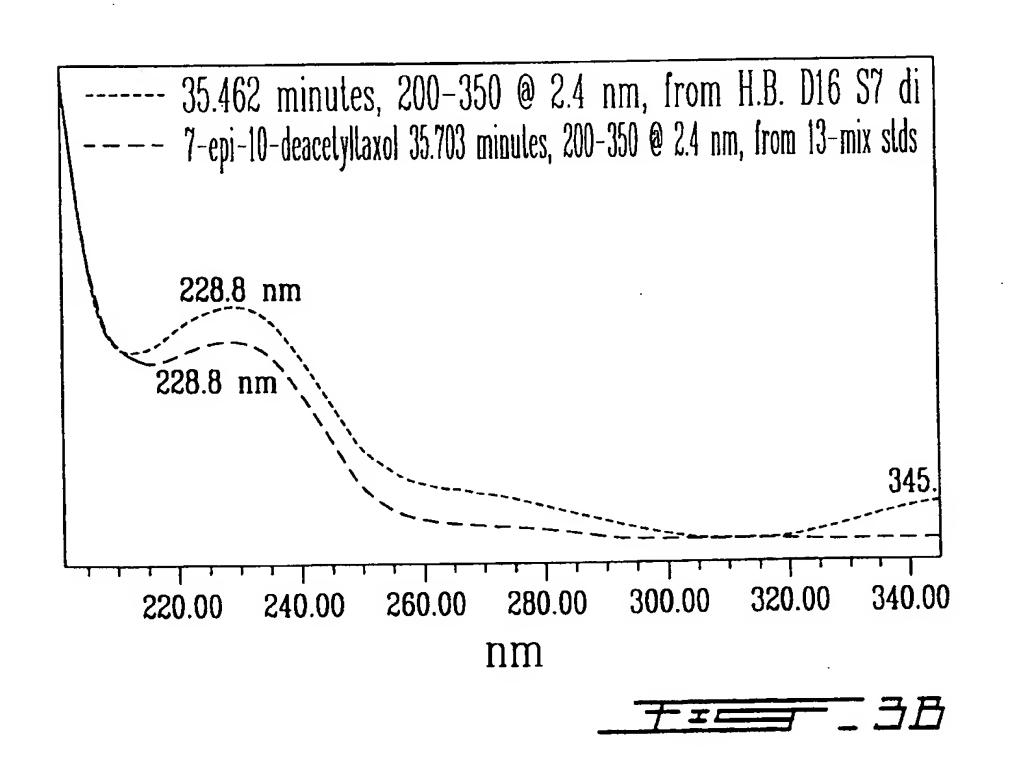




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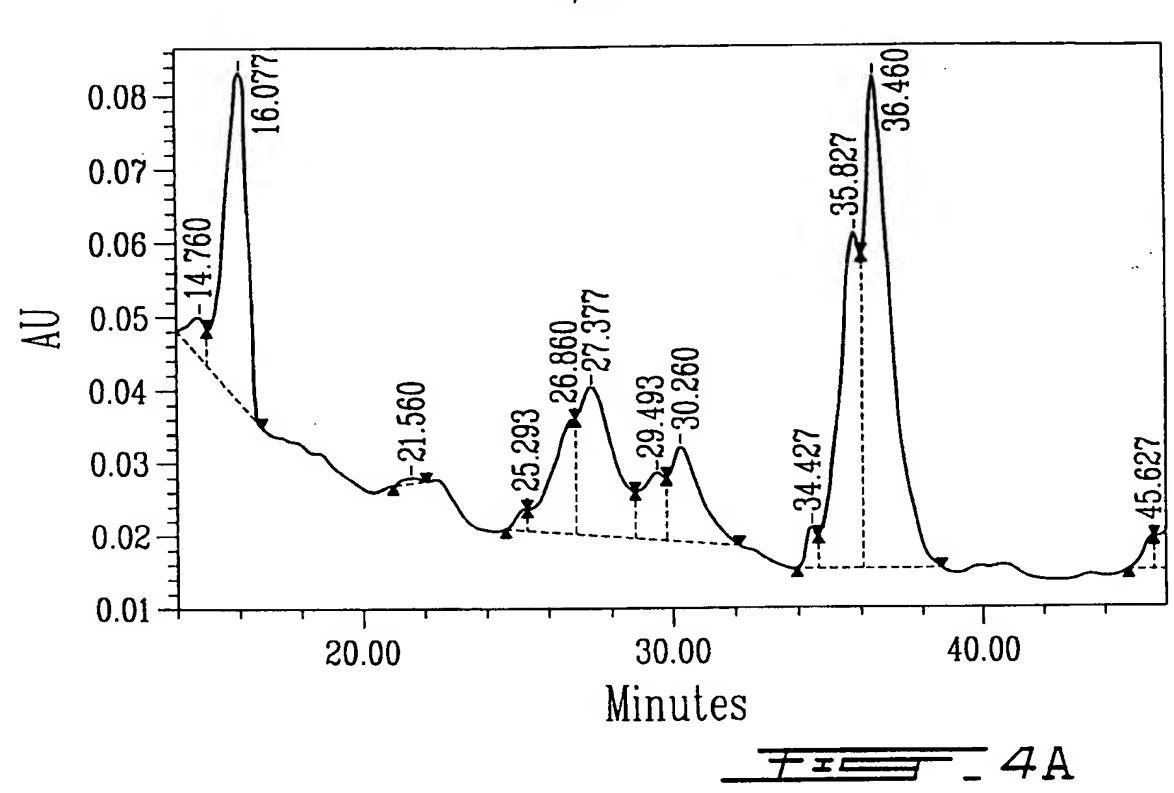


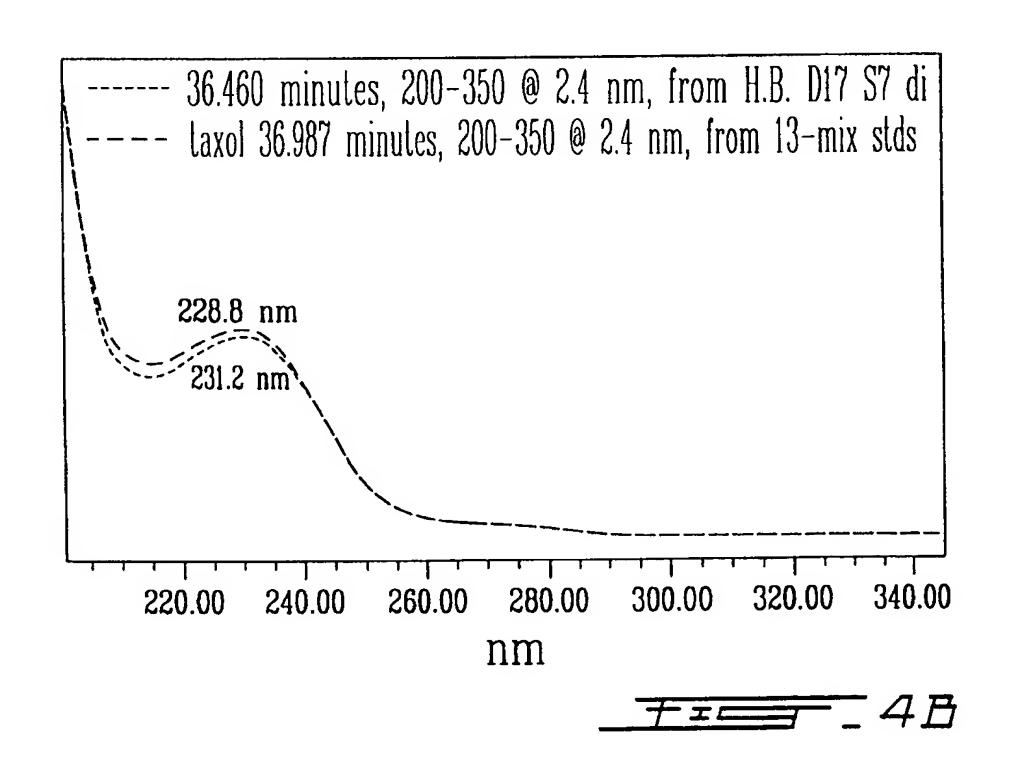




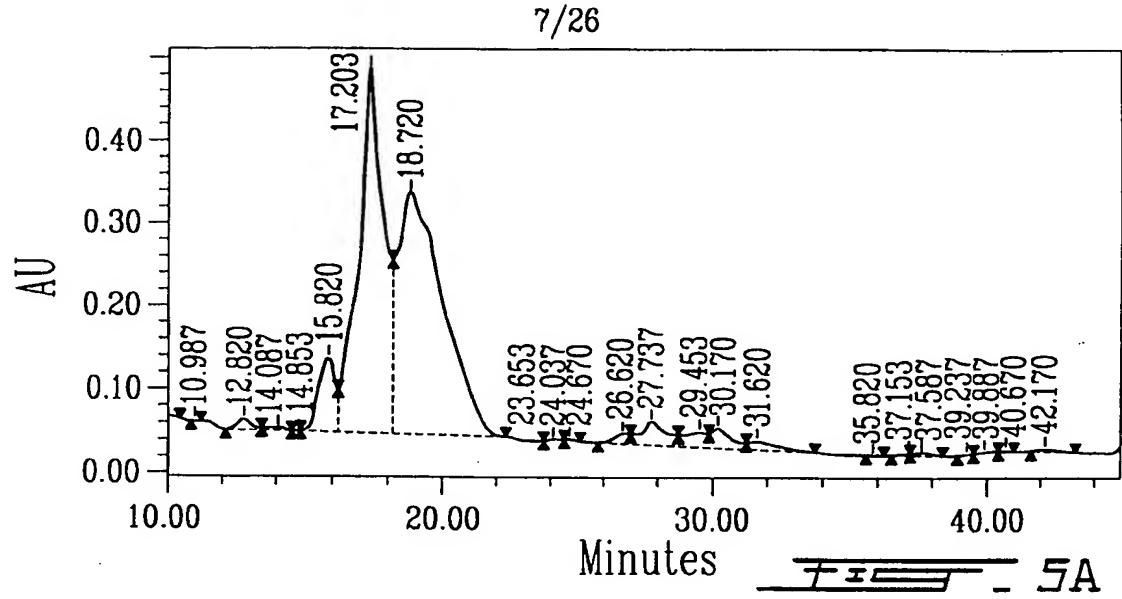
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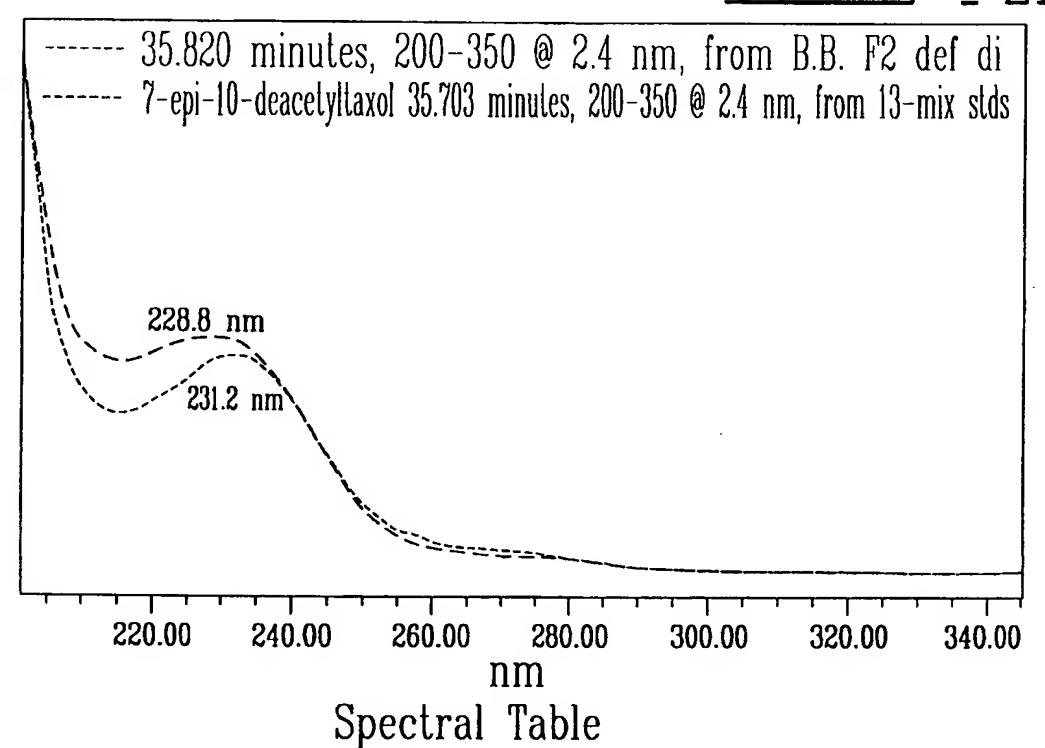






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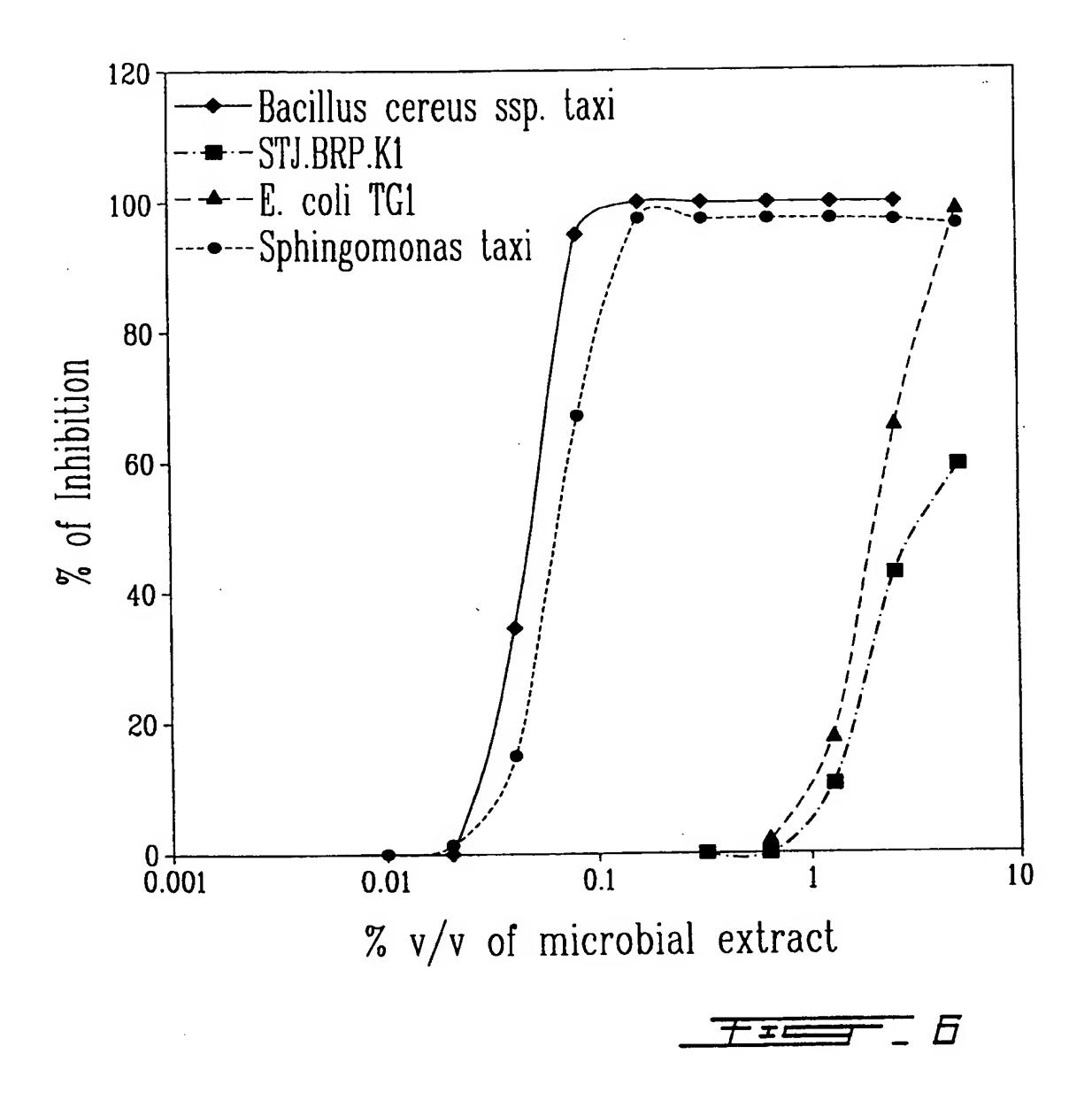




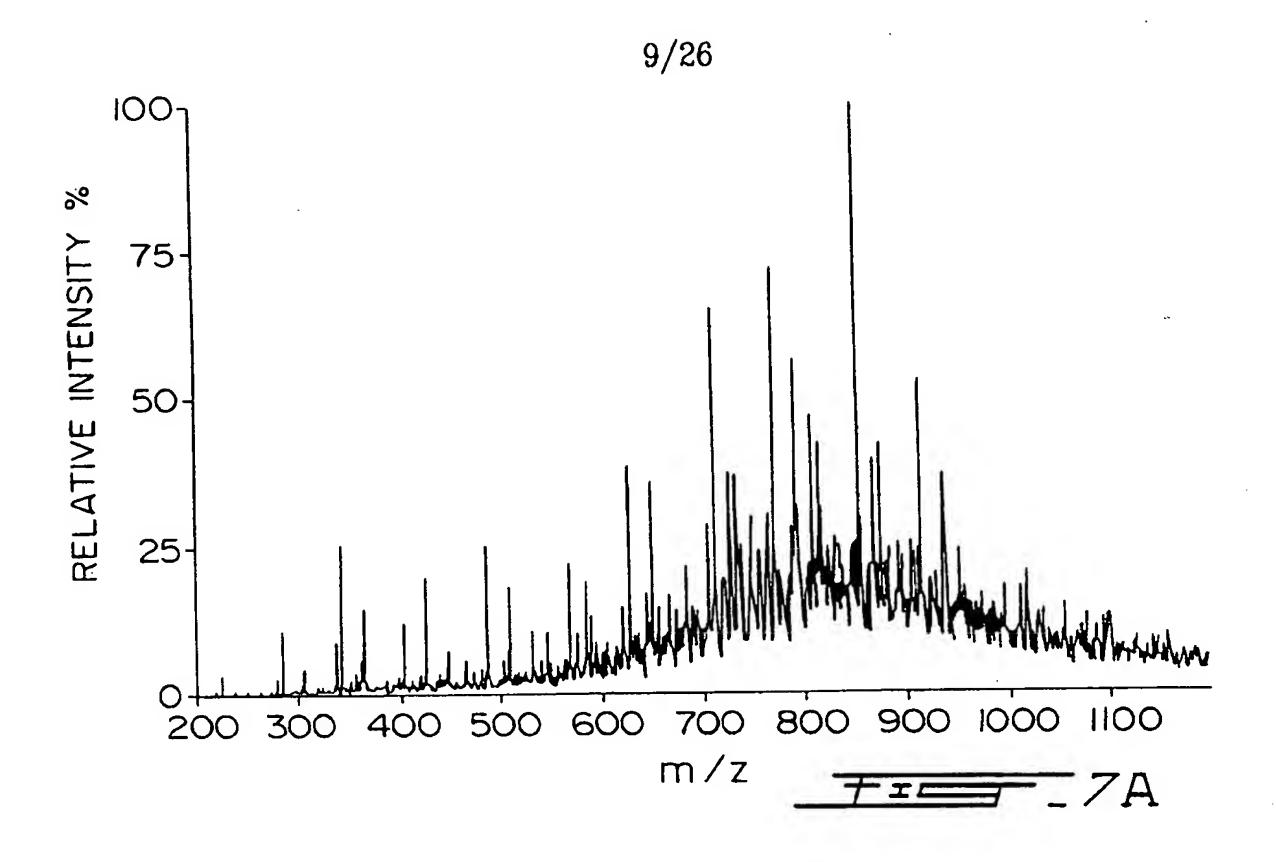
#	Retention Time	Source	Spectrum Name	Baseline Correct	Searchable	Traceable
1	35.820	B.B. F2 def di		On	Yes	Yes
2	35.703	13-mix stds	7-epi-10-deacetyltaxol	0n	Yes	Yes

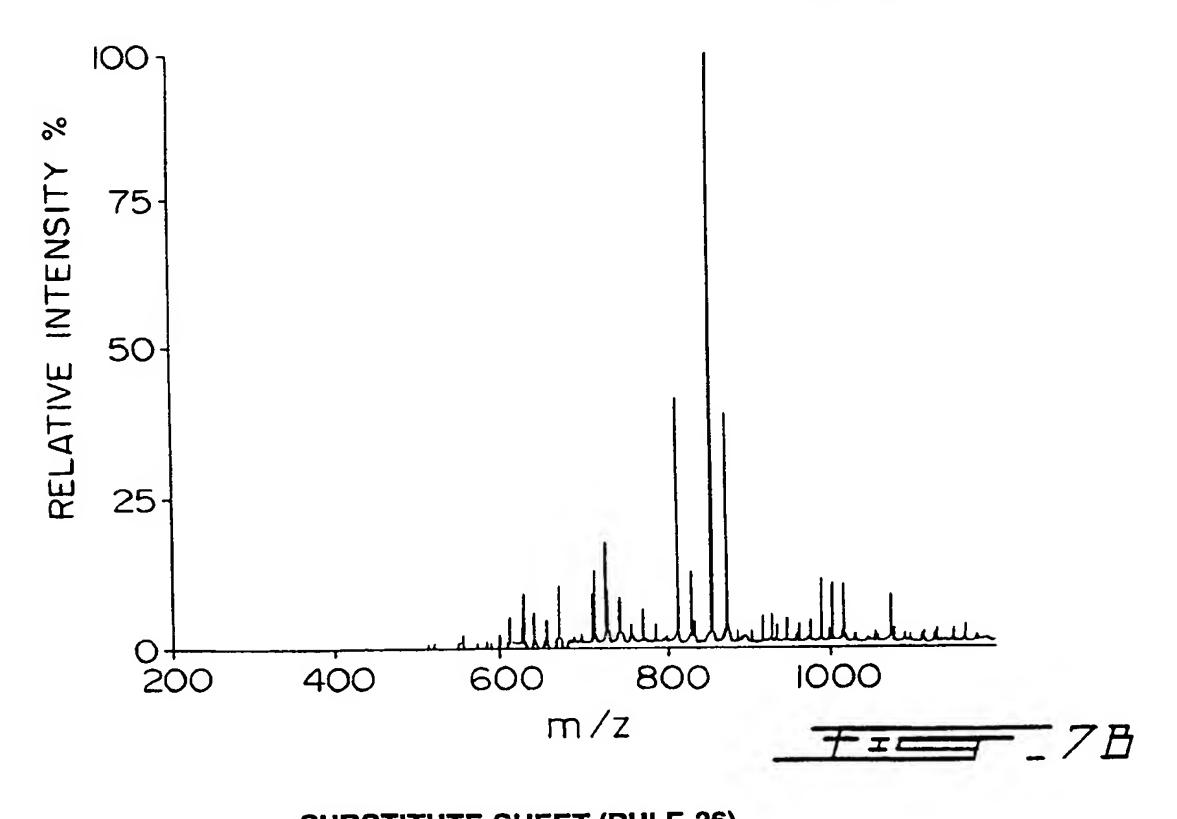
Spectral Table

#	Start Wyln	End	Resolution	Smooth	Derivative	Spline		Maximum Absorbance
-								
	200	350	2.4	None	None	Off	200.6	0.00501
2	200	350	2.4	None	None	Off	200.6	0.42673



SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)





SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

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0	120	180	4	0	9	N	∞	4	0	9	2	∞	840	0	9	0	1080	1140	20	1260	1320	1380	1440	Ö	1556
ATCCAACGCG	GAGTTTGATC	AGATCTTCGG	GAATAACAGT	CCAGAGGATG	Ü	TACG	GTGAGT	GTACCGGG	GCTAGCGTTG	GTGAAAGCCT	GAGGTGAGTG	GGCGAAGGCG	AGGATTAGAT	GGTCTTTGGG	TTAAAACTCA	AAGCAACGCG	TCTTCCCTTC	ATGTTGGGTT	GGGACTCTAA	CATGGCCCTT	CTCGCGAGAG	AGAGCATGAA	CAGGCCTTGT	CTAACTCGTA	AAGGTA
CAAGCTATGC	CTAGTGATTA	AAGTCGAACG	CTTTGGTTCG	AGATTTATCG	CCAAGGCGAC	GGCCCAGACT	CCAGCAATGC	TGATAATGAC	TACGGAAGGA	TAAGTTAGAG	GAATCCAGGA	GAACACCAGT	GGGAGCAAAC	CCGGGGGACTT	GGCCGCAAGG	GTTTAATTCG	GAGACAGATC	GTGTCGTGAG	CATTTAGTTG	GTCAAGTCCT	GGGCAGCAAA	CTGCAACTCG	AATACGTTCC	AGGCGTTGCG	AAGTCGTAAC
ATAGAATACT	GGCGGCCGCA	TAACACATGC	GGAATCTGCC	GTAAGTCCAA	TAAGAGCGCA	ACTGAGACAC	AAAGCCTGAT	TACCCGGGAA	GCCGCGGTAA	GGCGGCTTTG	TGCATCGCTT	ATATTCGGAA	CGAAAGCGTG	AACTAGCTGT	TGGGGAGTAC	GGAGCATGTG	ACGATTTCTG	TCGTCAGCTC	TAGTTACCAT	TGGGGATGAC	CGGTGACAGT	GGATTGTTCT	TGCCGCGGTG	GTTCACCCGA	GACTGGGGTG
AGGTGACACT	TCGACCTGCA	GCGCCATGCC	GTAACGCGTG	GGATGATGAC	GTTGGTGTGG	CCACACTGGG	\mathcal{O}	AAAGCTCTTT	CGTGCCAGCA	AGCGCACGTA	ט	AG	\mathcal{O}	AAACGATGAT	GTTATCCGCC	CACAAGCGGT	ACATGTCCGG	GCATGGCTG	TCGCCTT	CGGAGGAAGG	GCTACAATGG	GTCTCAGTTC	CGGATCAGCA	TGGGAGTTGG	TGGGCTTAGC
CAAGCTATTT		ACGAACGCTG	GCACGGGTGC	TGCTAATACC	GGATTAGCTA	GGATGATCAG	GGAATATTGG	TTAGGTTGTT	CGGCTAACTC	CTGGGCGTAA	TCCAGAATTG	TGTAGAGGTG	CTGGTATTGA	TCCACGCCGT	AACGCATTAA	CGGGGGCCTG	CCAGCGTTTG	ACGCAGGTGC	S	GGTGATAAGC	CTACACACGT	TCCAAAAGCC	GTA	CGTCACACCA	GACCACG
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09	120	180	240	300	360	420	480	540	009	099	720	780	840	900	096	102(108	114(120(126	132(138(144(150	151	
CAAGTCGAGC	ACACGTGGGT	ATAATATTT	GGACCCGCGT	CCGACCTGAG	GGCAGCAGTA	GATGAAGGCT	AGCTGGCACC	CGGTAATACG	GTTTCTTAAG	AGACTTGAGT	ATGGAGGAAC	AGCGTGGGGA	AAGTGTTAGA	GGAGTACGGC	GCATGTGGTT	ACTCTAGAGA	AGCTCGTGTC	GCCATCATTA	ATGACGTCAA	ACAAAGAGCT	TGTAGGCTGC	GCGGTGAATA	ACCCGAAGTC	GGGTGAAGTC		
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GATGAACGCT	CTTATGAAG	ATAACTCCG			GACTGAGA	GAAAGTC	ŢĞ	•	-		TCCATGTGTA	TCTGGTCTGT	TGGTAGTCCA	TGAAGTTAAC			CAGAGTGAC		CIGC	CTGGGCTACA	TAATCTCATA	AATCGCTA	ממפממפפ	CCAGCCGC		
でなり上しむむ上なり	AGAGCTTGCT	TAAGACTGGG	GTTCGAAATT	AGTTGGTGAG	GCCACACTGG	CGCAATGGAC	AAAACTCTGT	CTAACCAGAA	GCGTTATCCG	AAGCCCACGG	AAAGTGGAAT	AAGGCGACTT	TTAGATACCC	CCTTTAGTGC	AAACTCAAAG	CAACGCGAAG	CTTCGGGAG	GGGTTAAGTC	TCTAAGGTGA	CCCTTATGAC	GAGGTGAGC	CATGAAGCTG	CCTTGTACAC	CCTTTATGGA		ני
上でからよりなりなり				TUPATTACE	_											DAADULTA AT	上り上上してはなり		してしていていました	ATCATCATGC	しじししなけるなりむ	ATUUUUTUAA	じじじししししたさい	なな上ででででしてい	に対けてなるとののよりの	こりりななしなれてり

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09	120	180	240	300	360	420	480	-		099	720	780	840	006	096	1020	1080	1140	1200	1260	1320	1380	1440	1500	1515
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GATGAACGCT	TCTATGACGT	TAACTTCG	GAAAGATGGT	GTAACGGCTC	GACTGAGACA			=	AATTATTGGG	GGCTCAACCG					-	-		AGTCCCGCA		TGACCTGGGC	AAGCCAATCC	_	ACACACCGC		
でなり上つせせようし	GAAGCTTGCT	TAAGACTGGG	GGGGATGATT	AGTTGGTGAG	GCCACACTGG	CGCAATGGAC	AAAACTCTGT	TAACCAGAAA	CGTTATCCGG	GAAAGCCCAC	GAAAAGCGGA	CGAAGGCGGC	GATTAGATAC	GCCCTTTAGT	TGAAACTCAA	AGCAACGCGA	TCCCCTTCGG	TaTTGGGTtA	GCACTCTAAG	ATGCCCCTTA	CCGCGAGGTC	CCTACATGAA	CGGGCCTIGT	GTAACCGTAA	GGTAA
サイントサイプスプル			TCCTTCATG	_					_														ATACGTTCC	GTCGGTGGA	GTCGTAACAA

	13/26	
60 120 180 180 380 420 540 600		
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	GTCTTGTAGA ATACCGGTGG GAGCAACCTTGA CCGCAAGGTT TTAATTCGAT ATGGATTGGT TGTGAATGT TGTGAATTGT AAGTCATCAT AAGTCATCGC GCAACTCCCG TAGGTCCCCG TAGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT CGGTAGCTT	

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09	120	180	240	300	360	420	480	540	009	099	720	780	840	006	096	1020	1080	1140	1200	1260	1320	1380	1440	1500	1513
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	15/26																								
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AGAGTTTGAT	GAACAGATGG			CATTAGCTAG	GGTGATCGGC	GAATCTTCCG	CGGATCGTAA	GACGGTACCT		GATGTGAAAG			_			TTCGAAGCAA	GACGICCCCI	AGATGTTGGG	TGGGCACTCT	ATCATGCCCC	AAACCGCGAG	TCGACTGCGT	TCCCGGGCCT	GAGGTAACCT	ACAAGGTAAC

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GCCTAACAGT	GCGAGTCGGA	CGGTAGCACA	GAGGAGCTTG	CTCTTCGGGT	GACGAGTGGC	
GGACGGGTGA	GTAATGTCTG	GGGATCTGCC	CGATGGAGGG	GGATAACCAC	TGGAAACGGT	120
GGCTAATACC	GCATAATGTC	GCAAGACCAA	AGTGGGGGAC	CTTCGGGCCT	CACACCATCG	
GATGAACCCA	GATGGGATTA	GCTAGTAGGT	O	CTCACCTAGG	CGACGATCCC	240
TAGCTGGTCT	GAGAGGATGA	CCAGCCACAC	TGGAACTGAG	ACACGGTCCA	GACTCCTACG	.300
GGAGGCAGCA	GTGGGGAATA	TTGCACAATG	GGCGCAAGCC	TGATGCAGCC	ATGCCGCGTG	9
TATGAAGAAG	GCCTTCGGGT	TGTAAAGTAC	TTTCAncege	GAGGAAGGGG	ACGAGGTTAA	420
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GCGGTAATAC	GGAGGGTGCA	AGCGTTAATC	GGAATTACTG	GGCGTAAAGC		4
GGTCTGTTAA	GTCAGATGTG	AAATCCCCGG	GCTTAACCTG	GGAACTGCAT	TTGAAAC	
CAGGCTTGAG	TCTTGTAGAG	GGGGGTAGAA	TTCCAGGTGT	AGCGGTGAAA		9
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Tyggcagaga	TGCCTTAGTG	CCTTCGGGAA	CCGTGAGACA	GGTGCTGCAT		1020
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GCCAGCGATT	CGGTCGGGAA	CTCAAAGGAG	ACTGCCGGTG	ATAAACCGGA	GGAAGGTGGG	1140
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TACAAAGAGA	AGCGACCTCG	CGAGAGCAAG	CGGACCTCAC	AAAGTGCGTC	GTAGTCCGGA	26
TCGGAGTCTG	CAACTCGACT	CCGTGAAGTC	GGAATCGCTA	GTAATCGTGG	ATCAGAATGC	32
CACGGTGAAT	ACGTTCCCGG	GCCTTGTACA	CACCGCCCGT	CACACCATGG	GAGTGGGTTG	38
CAAAAGAAGT	AGGTAGCTTA	ACCTTCGGGA	GGGCGCTTAC	CACTTTGTGA	TTCATGACTG	
GGGTGAAGTC	GTAACAAG					1458

CATGCCGCGT

CTGATGCAGC

AAGC

CCCCC

ATTGCACAAT

AGTGGGGAAT

GGCCTTCGGG

CGATTGACGT

CGGAGGGTGC

AGACTCCTAC

TCTCACTATC

CCTTCGGGCC

GGGA

AAGAGG

CGCAAGACCA

CGCATAACGT

AGATGGGATT

TGAGAGGATG

AGTAATGTCT

AGTGCGAGTC

GCCCACCTAG

AATG

CGGGGT

AGCTAGTAGG

GACACGGTCC

CTGA

CTGGAA

ACCAGCCACA

GCGACGATCC

CTGGAAACGG

CCA

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GGGGATCTGC

TGCTCTTGGG

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ACAGAG

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CAAGCGGTGG

ATCCACGGAA

TGGCTGTCGT

TTTGAAACTG

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CTCAGGTGCG

AAGACTGACG

GACA

CCCCIG

CGAAGGCGGC

TAGCGGTGAA

GGTG

ATTCCA

rGGGGGTAGA

GTCTTGTAGA

ATACCGGTGG

AGTCAGATGT

CACGCCGTAA

AGIC

CCIGGI

GATTAGATAC

CGCGTTAAGT

CTAA

CCGGAG

GGAGTGGCTT

GTTCCCTTGA

GAGCAAACAG

GGGCCCGCA

GACG

TGAATT

AAAATTCAAA

TACTCTTGAC

'TACC

GAACCT

GCAACGCGAA

TTAATTCGAT

CCGCAAGGTT

ATGCTTTGGT

AGGTGCTGCA

AGAC

ACCCTG

GCCTTCGGGA

GCGCAACCCT

ACGA

CCCGCA

TGGGTTAAGT

TGTGAAATGT

TCGGTCGGGA

AAGTCATCAT

AAGCGACCTC

ACGATGTCGA

TGCCAGCAGC

GCTAACTCCG

ACCG

AGAAGC

TACCCGCAGA

AAGCGTTAAT

GGAGGAAGGC

SCGG

CTTTCA

TTGTAAAGTA

GGGCGTAAAG

CGGAATTACT

GGGAACTGCA

ACCT

GGCTTA

GAAATCCCCG

GATGCGGTTA

CGCACGCAGG

ATTCATGACT CTTTGTG CA AGGGCG AACCTTCGGG TAGGTAGCTT CGTAACAAGT

ACAATGGCGC

AGGAAGGTGG

GATAAACCGG

CGGT

GACTGC

CACACGTGCT

GCTA

AGTAGG

GGCCCTTACG

ACTCAAAGGA

TATCCTTTGT

CGTAGTCCGG

GGAGTGGGTT

TCACACCATG

CCC

ACACCG

GGCCTTGTAC

AGTAATCGTG

CGCT

CGGAAT

TCCGTGAAGT

GCAACTCGAC

TACGTTCCCG

CAAAGTGCGT

CTCA

GCGGAC

GCGAGAGCAA

GATCAGAATG

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

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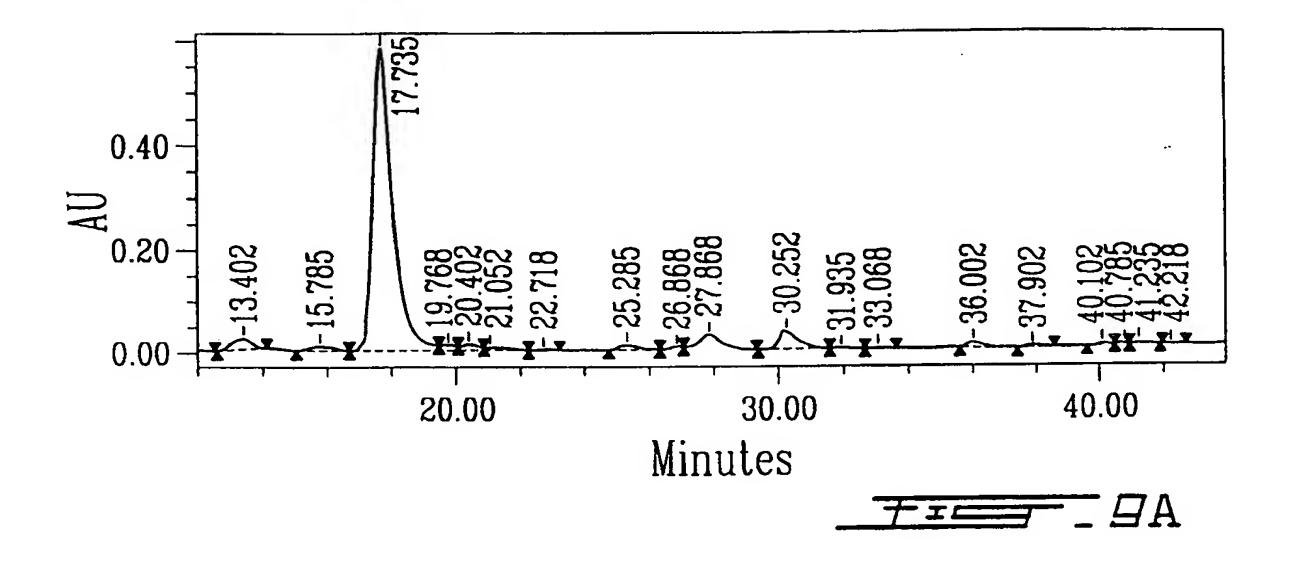
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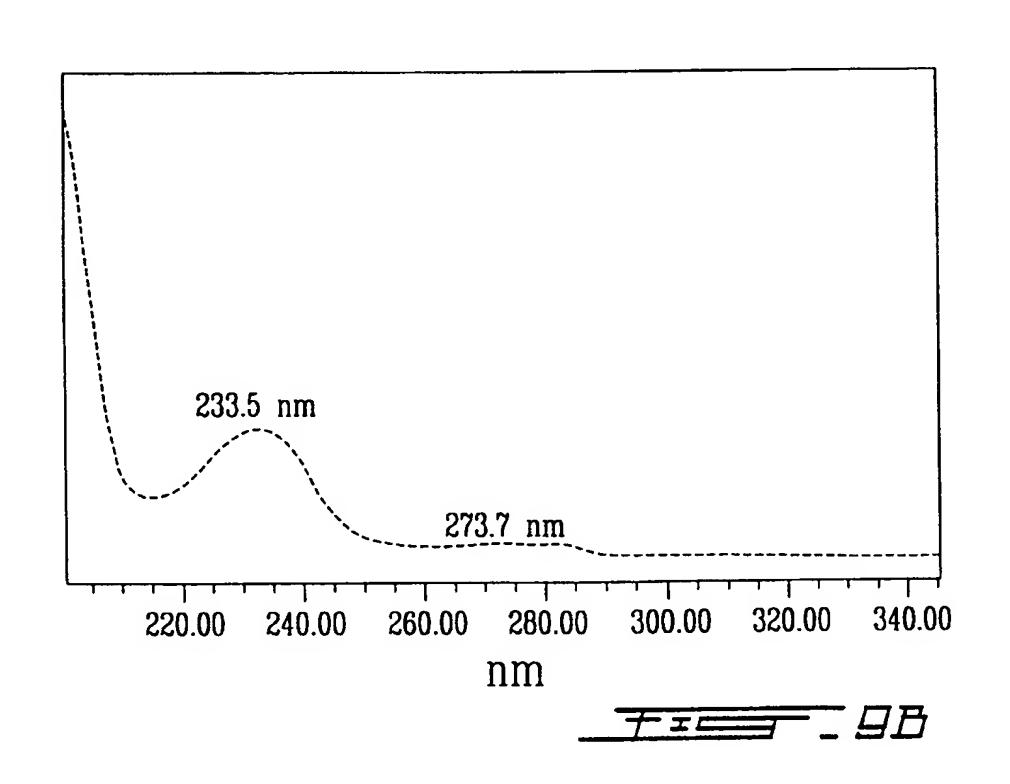
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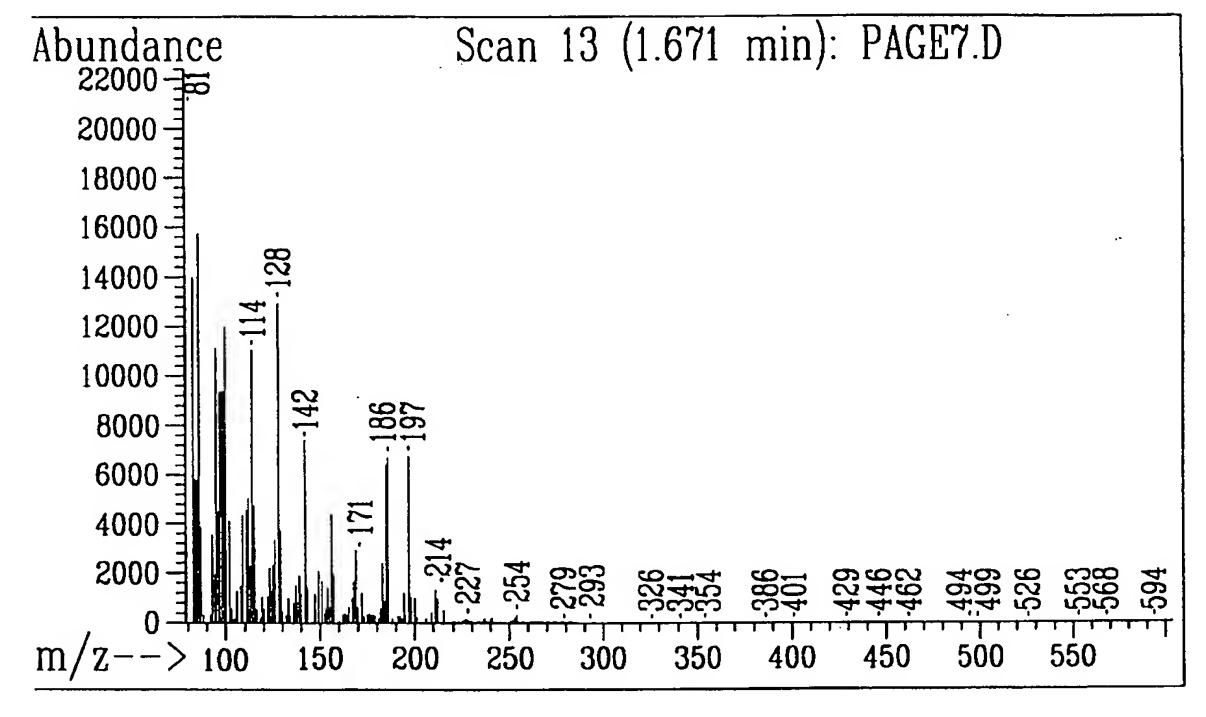
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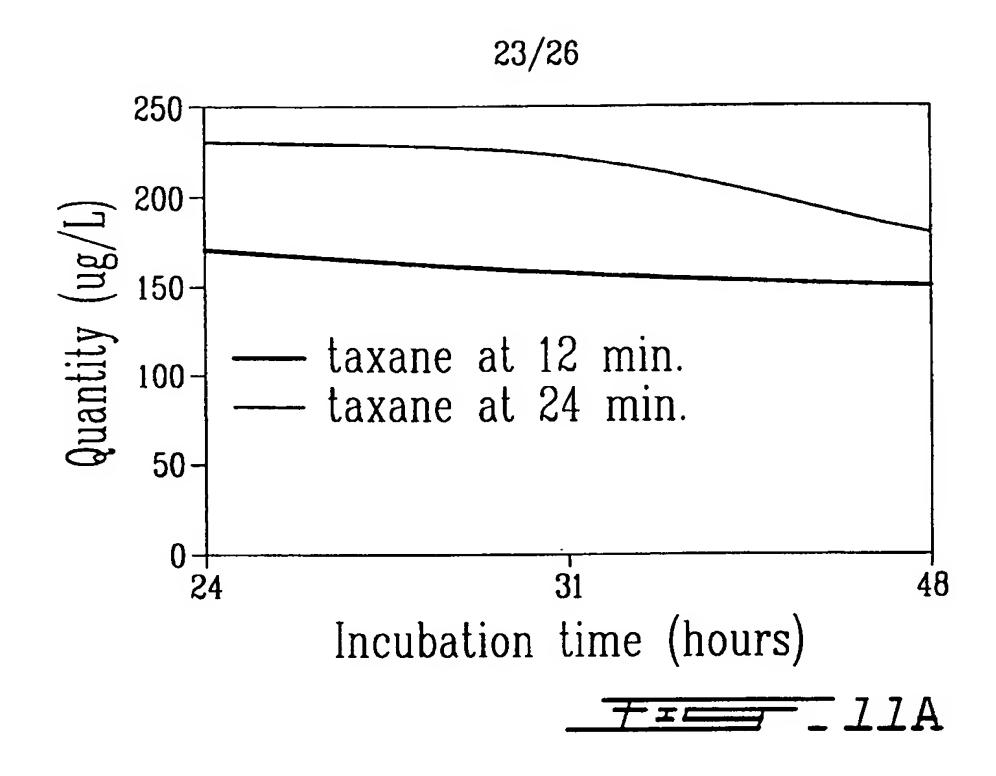
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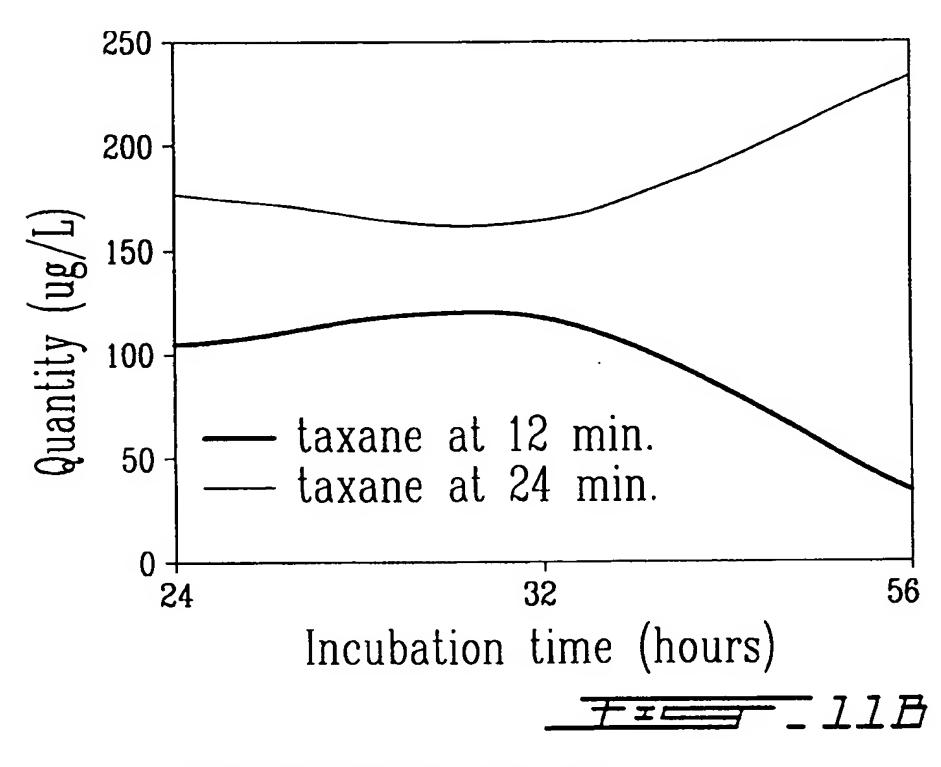
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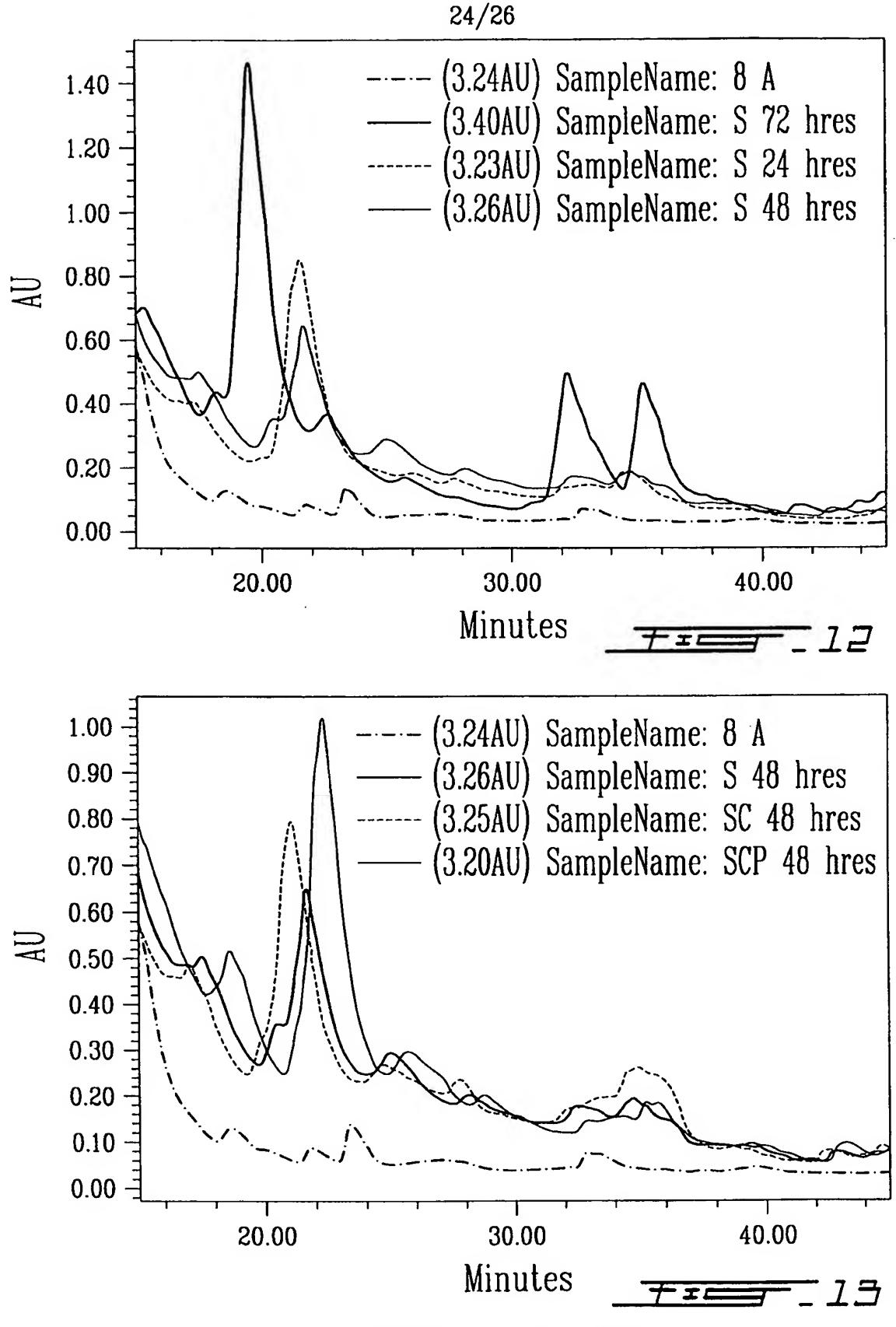
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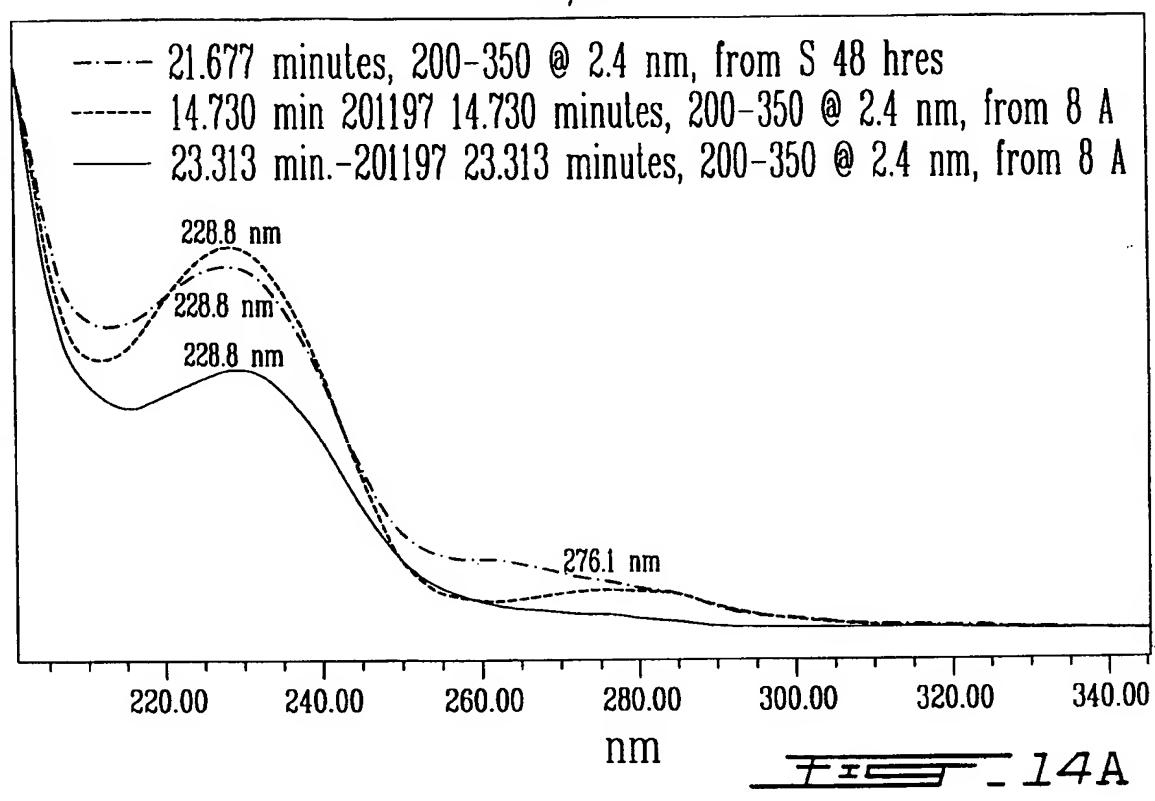
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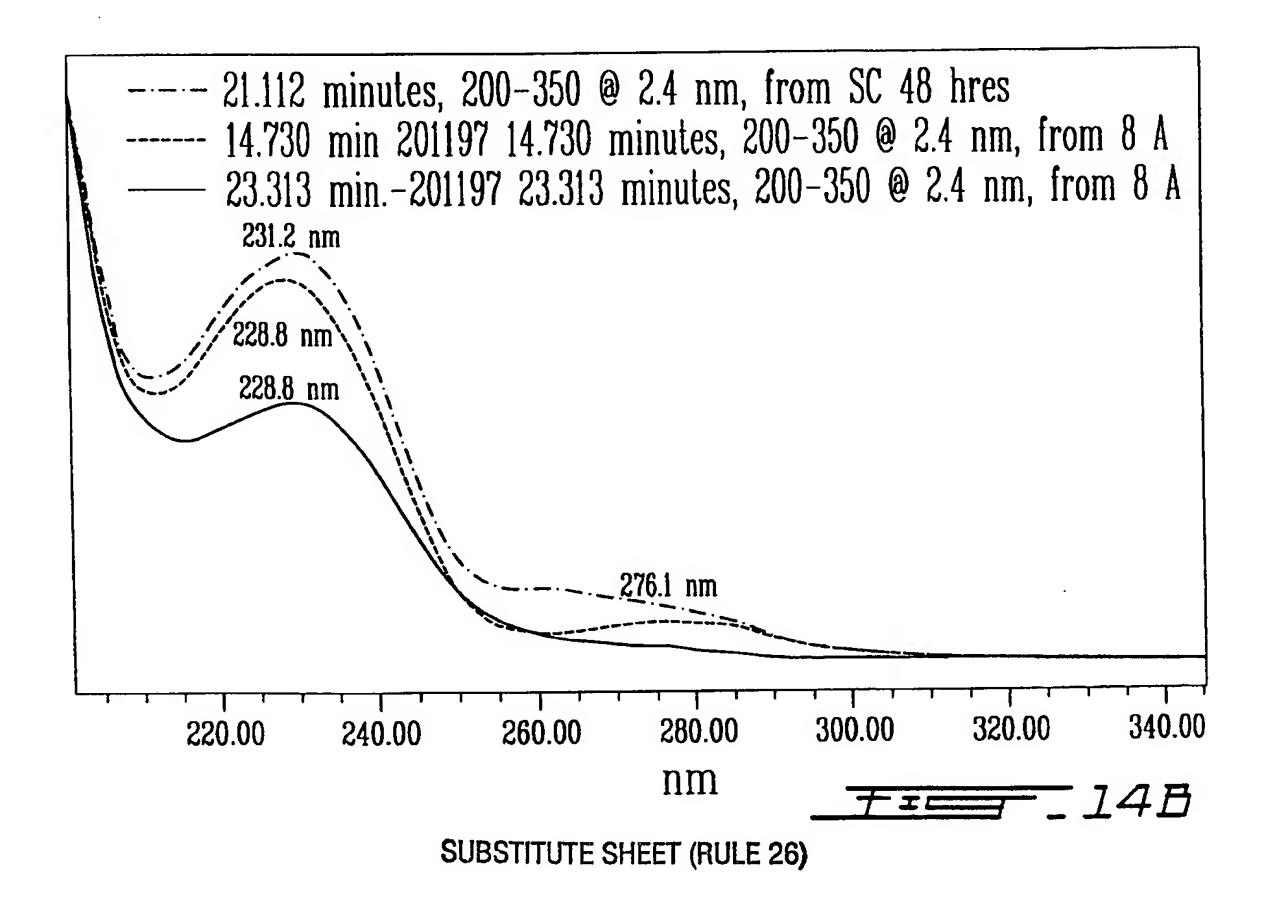
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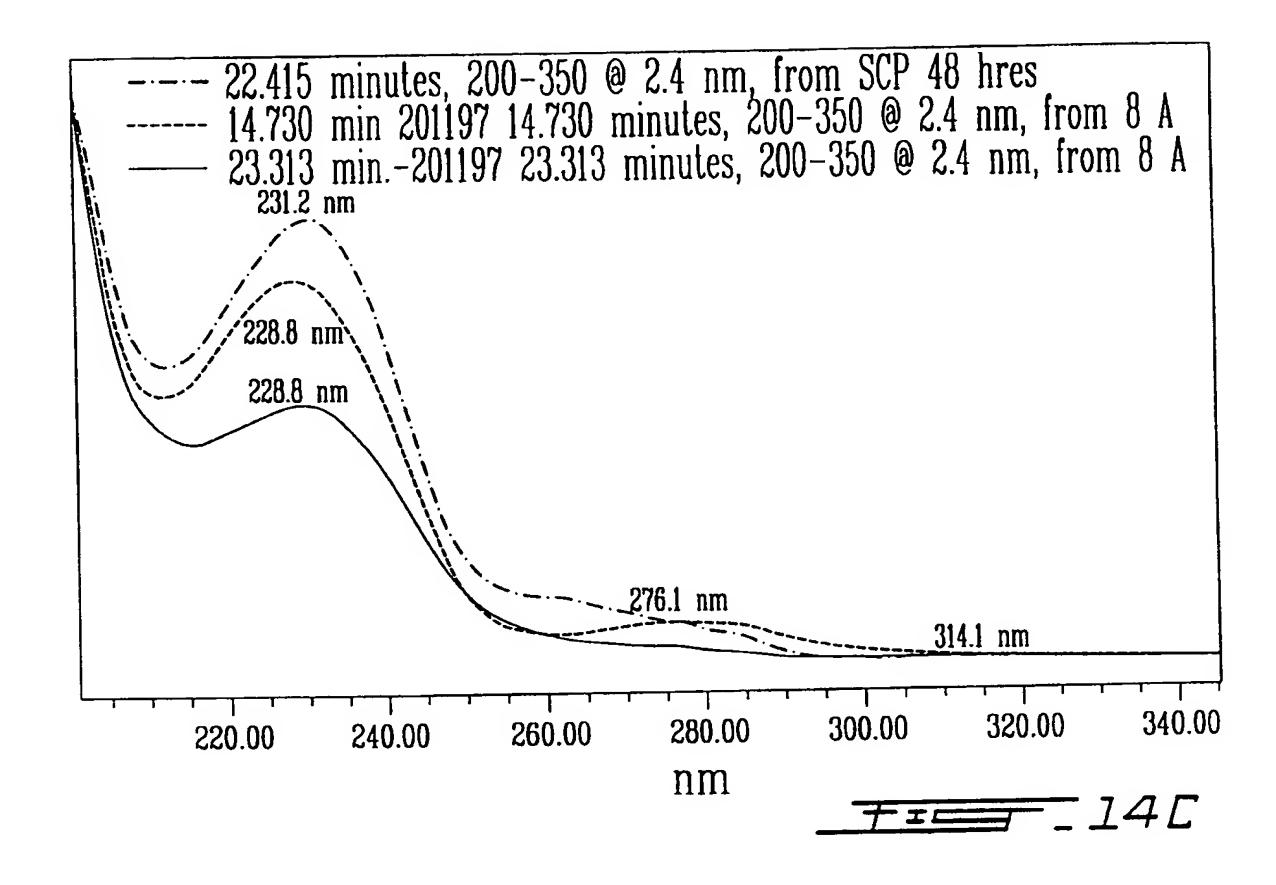


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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inti Ional Application No PCT/CA 98/01150

IPC 6	C12P7/62 C12P7/26 //(C12P17 C12R1:125)		'20)2,
	International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classificat	ion and IPC	
B. FIELDS	SEARCHED cumentation searched (classification system followed by classification	n evmhale)	
IPC 6			
Documentati	on searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that su	ch documents are included. In the fields sear	ched
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	ENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		Relevant to claim No.
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the rele	vant passages	Nelevant to claim No.
X	WO 95 04154 A (NIPPON STEEL CORPO 9 February 1995 see page 5; claims 1-10	RATION)	1-57
X	WO 96 34972 A (BCM DEVELOPMENT IN 7 November 1996 cited in the application see the whole document	C.)	1-57
X	EP 0 668 360 A (BRISTOL-MYERS SQU COMPANY) 23 August 1995 see page 6 - page 7; claims 1-21	IBB	1-57
		-/	
X Furt	her documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	X Patent family members are listed in	annex.
"A" docume consider filling of the which citation of the country o	ent defining the general state of the art which is not dered to be of particular relevance document but published on or after the international date ent which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or is cited to establish the publication date of another on or other special reason (as specified) nent referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or means	"T" later document published after the internor priority date and not in conflict with the cited to understand the principle or the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the classification and inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the classification and inventive step when the document of particular relevance; the classification because to involve an invention of the considered to involve an invention of the combined with one or more ments, such combination being obvious	he application but bry underlying the aimed invention be considered to urnent is taken alone aimed invention entive step when the se other such docu-
"P" docum	ent published prior to the international filling date but than the priority date claimed	in the art. "&" document member of the same patent for	
Date of the	actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international sear	rch report
2	27 May 1999	10/06/1999	
Name and	mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk	Authorized officer	
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int tional Application No PCT/CA 98/01150

Category °	tion) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Juliegoly		
X,L	CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS, vol. 130, 1999	1-40
	Columbus, Ohio, US; abstract no. 174870,	
	JAZIRI, M. ET AL: "A new concept for the	
	isolation of bioactive taxoids"	
v	XP002103986 see abstract	41-57
•	& CURR. TOP. PHYTOCHEM. (1997), 1, 67-76 CODEN: CTPHFK,	
X	CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS, vol. 128, Columbus, Ohio, US;	6
	abstract no. 202215,	
	HANSON, RONALD L. ET AL: "Enzymic	
	hydrolysis of 7-xylosyltaxanes by xylosidase from Moraxella sp."	
	XP002103987	1 5 7 57
Υ	see abstract & BIOTECHNOL. APPL. BIOCHEM. (1997),	1-5,7-57
	26(3), 153-158 CODEN: BABIEC; ISSN:	
	0885-4513,	
X	WO 96 32490 A (NOVOPHARM LIMITED)	6
	17 October 1996	1-5,7-57
Y	see page 1 - page 6; claims 1-9	1-5,/-5/
X	WO 97 16200 A (MERCK & CO., INC.)	6
	9 May 1997 cited in the application	
Υ	see the whole document	18-30
Υ	WO 93 21338 A (THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, INC.)	1-57
	28 October 1993	
	cited in the application	
	see claims 1-33	
Υ	STROBEL, G. ET AL.: "Taxol from	1-57
	Pestalotiopsis microspora, an endophytic fungus of Taxus wallachiana"	
	MICROBIOLOGY,	
	vol. 142, 1996, pages 435-440, XP002103985	
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Inte ional Application No
PCT/CA 98/01150

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